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**CONFESIONS OF AN MP'S WIFE**  
Linda McDougall on waiting for E-Day WEEKEND

**MONDAY**

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## Police may face Bridgewater trial

### Cheers in court for freedom after 18 lost years

BY RICHARD FORD AND STEPHEN FARRELL

TWO former police officers may face criminal charges after three men jailed for murdering Carl Bridgewater were freed yesterday amid allegations of "serious, substantial and widespread police malpractice".

The detectives allegedly forged a confession which was instrumental in bringing the men to trial and sending them to prison for 18 years, and yesterday the Crown accepted that newly discovered scientific evidence left the prosecution case "fundamentally flawed".

Tumultuous applause and cheering greeted Vincent Hickey, his cousin Michael and James Robinson as they appeared in the dock at the Court of Appeal. They were released on unconditional bail pending a full hearing in April, when their convictions will almost certainly be quashed. Patrick Molloy, who was convicted with them, died in prison in 1981 still protesting his innocence.

After the hearing, as the Prime Minister said that he expected an inquiry into the original convictions and within the West Midlands police, the men denounced the criminal justice system. Vincent Hickey, still wearing prison clothes, told a press conference: "Not only have the police been devious and deceitful by keeping innocent men in prison, far worse, after having a child killed, they have deceived Mr and Mrs Bridgewater."

The men's freedom hinged on the discovery this month of scientific evidence proving for the first time the existence of the bogus confession statement, purportedly made by Vincent Hickey but apparently concocted by the police, which Molloy had claimed was used to trick him into

admitting the crime. Without Molloy's confession, the Crown would have had no case, Lord Justice Roth said yesterday.

Later, Robinson renewed the attack on the West Midlands police. "It was not a case of one rotten apple in the barrel, they were all rotten. You had to be rotten to get into the barrel. It wasn't about over-zealous policemen thinking they had the right guys, it was a concerted conspiracy."

One of the three officers named in court, Graham Leake, now works as a security guard. He refused to comment on the Court of Appeal hearing at which the police operation was branded "dishonest and deceitful". Another of the officers allegedly involved, Detective Constable John Perkins, died two years ago.

Michael Mansfield, QC, for Molloy, said: "It is only a small part of serious substantial and widespread police malpractice involving a number of very high-ranking officers down to the lowest, who must have been involved in what was going on."

He said that the particular ground of Molloy's confession meant that the convictions were unsafe. Lord Justice Roth said that he had no reason to believe the convictions would not be quashed.

After the hearing, Vincent Hickey yesterday paid tribute to his own and Michael Hickey's mothers for the way they campaigned for their release. Robinson said that Anne Skeet and Ann Whelan should be rewarded in the New Year's Honours list. "The problem for the West Midlands police force was that they happened to fit up Ann Whelan's son," he said. "They got a tiger by the tail." Vincent Hickey added:



Freedom at last: Ann Whelan (left) hugs her son Michael Hickey outside the High Court. Beside them are Anne Skeet with her son Vincent Hickey and Jimmy Robinson

ed: "We are fortunate. Me and Mike have got the best mums in the world."

Robinson said that only Mrs Whelan had kept up their spirits: "That woman there is four foot and she and our solicitor have told people who didn't want to know. They were long lonely years, we have cried with despair and people have looked at us with contempt in their eyes for killing a kid. I am not bitter but I am angry it has taken so long. This is not new evidence, it is stuff that has been there from day one."

Nick Molloy, the son of Patrick Molloy, said: "I feel very sad. It's great to see these men today. I salute the heroes — these men. They have courage, true courage. Look at

poor old Hanratty, and Iris Bentley who has just died. If the hang-em-all brigade had had their way, we wouldn't be here today."

Mrs Whelan was glad that the battle was over, but she remained angry that the men had suffered years of mental and physical abuse. "I was very much on my own for years," she said. "But I just fought and fought and fought. The worst time was when people refused to listen. The authorities knew they were innocent, but they didn't want to hear. There is still a lot of fighting to be done, but Michael now needs time to think."

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## Key evidence was hidden for years

BY RICHARD FORD AND STEPHEN FARRELL

THE crucial evidence that led to the release of the Bridgewater Three lay undiscovered in their files for seven years until their solicitor found it two weeks ago.

A confession statement by Patrick Molloy taken in Wombourne police station in December 1978 was subjected to Electrostatic Document Analysis (Esa) by the forensic scientists Robert Radley and Dr Anthony Hardcastle in 1990. But they found no sign that the statement had been tampered with. Esa can

show if documents have been tampered with or reveal impressions left from earlier sheets of paper — technology not available when the men were sentenced — but the only imprints the scientists found were consistent with those that one would expect to find on a document taken from a stack of witness statements.

"They found impressions of a familiar caption which one finds at the beginning of every statement under caution. There was nothing in the least surprising about finding that there, 'Jeremy Roberts, QC, for the Crown,' said yesterday. Most of the imprints had

disappeared with handling over the years, but a few words were protected by the exhibit label on the front page. They showed that the statement whose imprint appeared on the document had been in the name of Vincent Hickey and carried his signature.

Molloy, whose confession was crucial to the conviction of all the men, has always insisted that he was tricked into his admission when the police showed him a confession allegedly made by Hickey.

What Radley and Hardcastle did not know was that Hickey was interviewed in Redditch police station, 25 miles away from Molloy, and any statement he made could not have been written on the same pad as Molloy's.

The importance of the  
Continued on page 7, col 8

## Anger as German paper refers to 'the Jew Rifkind'

BY ROGER BOYES IN BERLIN AND PHILIP WEBSTER

A GERMAN newspaper which is closely aligned to Helmut Kohl, yesterday stood by its description of the Foreign Secretary as the "Jew Rifkind" and the writer of the article expressed amazement that the words could have been interpreted as a slur.

As a storm of protest greeted the remark in the solemn *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, its author defended his choice of words. "Is it an insult

in English to call somebody a Jew? Michaela Wiesel, the newspaper's 28-year-old specialist on European affairs, asked. "I am mortified that anyone could have read it like this."

The Prime Minister was urged to lodge a complaint after MPs from all parties branded the description of Malcolm Rifkind by the paper as an insult to him and to the country.

The offending words came at the end of an even-handed account of Mr Rifkind's speech to the Konrad Adenauer Institute in Bonn: "As if he was not completely convinced by his own words, the Jew Rifkind concluded — ironically, apologetically — with a quote from Luther, delivered in German, 'Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.'"

Ms Wiesel said: "I was only

trying to underline how surprising it was that somebody who is Jewish should quote the leading German Protestant reformer."

Mr Rifkind's family left Lithuania in 1899. Although the use of the expression "the Jew" is not as jarring in German as in English, nonetheless it has a strange ring, especially for older readers. Nazi newspapers in the 1930s prefaced almost any description of leading liberal politicians with "the Jew" even if the person had long ago abandoned his religion.

"The point of course is that Mr Rifkind, even when quoting Martin Luther, was speaking as British Foreign Secretary and not as a Jew, Catholic or Buddhist," said a senior British official who attended the lecture. "The real question is why [the newspaper] allowed such a phrase to stay in their columns."

At least two of the newspaper's board of publishers are regarded as tough conservatives who can on occasion be deeply critical of British politics and the British media. A year ago the newspaper published

Continued on page 2, col 5



### Times man wins top BBC award

Sam Kiley, Africa correspondent of *The Times*, was named Foreign Correspondent of the Year yesterday at the BBC's *What the Paper's Say Awards*. Mr Kiley, 32, who joined *The Times* as a trainee in 1987, was commended for his reports from Rwanda. The judges praised "the chastening clarity of his reports from one of the world's least manageable zones".

### Smuggler jailed

The pregnant daughter of a prominent businessman was jailed for 11 years yesterday for trying to smuggle cocaine worth £400,000 into Britain. Sara Westwood, 23, went as Judge Oppenheimer told her she had taken part in a "disgusting and terrible" trade.

## Surrey go into bat under floodlights

BY SIMON WILDE

ONE-DAY cricket is about to undergo a revolution in England if, as expected, proposals by Surrey are approved by the English Cricket Board.

Surrey, the third oldest county club in the country, whose patron is The Queen and whose most noted supporter is the Prime Minister, want to change their name to the *Surrey Lions*, play pop music between overs and stage a match under floodlights in the Sunday 40-overs league. They expect other clubs to follow suit.

The inspiration came from David Gilbert, the club's coach, who has seen similar marketing ploys used to good effect in his native Australia. Surrey won the league title last year and saw their home attendances rise from 4,000 to nearly 10,000 and they believe that they have the team to attract larger crowds still.

"We have spent the winter researching and planning means of attracting a wider audience to limited overs cricket," Paul Sheldon, Surrey's chief executive, said yesterday. "The current Surrey team, brimming with internationals, is highly marketable and our new initiatives will give young supporters an easy

means of identifying with their heroes."

For their plans to stage the first floodlit match between first-class counties, at the Oval on Wednesday, June 26, Surrey have already received the ECB's blessing. Their opponents will be Nottinghamshire, who agreed to the fixture being brought forward by four days and to the county championship match, due to start that day, being postponed for 48 hours.

The game would probably start at 5pm and finish at 10. The floodlights would be switched on when necessary, depending on the weather.

Although the prospect of the defending champions meeting last year's league runners-up should be an enticing prospect, Surrey had originally approached Yorkshire but they declined the floodlit fixture. The Nottinghamshire match clashes with the first week of Wimbledon tennis but Surrey hope to attract an attendance approaching the ground capacity of 17,000.

Alec Stewart, Surrey's captain, who is with the England touring team in New Zealand, said: "I think one-day cricket should be jazzed up. We want to attract more people."

NOW IN PAPERBACK

# Graham Swift

## Last Order

Brilliant

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Businessman's daughter weeps as judge condemns 'disgusting, terrible' crime.

## Pregnant drug smuggler sentenced to 11 years

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

THE pregnant daughter of a prominent businessman was jailed for 11 years yesterday for trying to smuggle cocaine worth £400,000 into Britain.

Sara Westwood, 23, whose father is Roger Westwood, the managing director of financial company Hogg Robinson, wept as Judge Oppenheimer told her she had taken part in a "disgusting and terrible" trade that led to destruction and death. Her parents and two sisters, who attended every day of her two-and-a-half-week trial, sat in shock as she was sentenced.

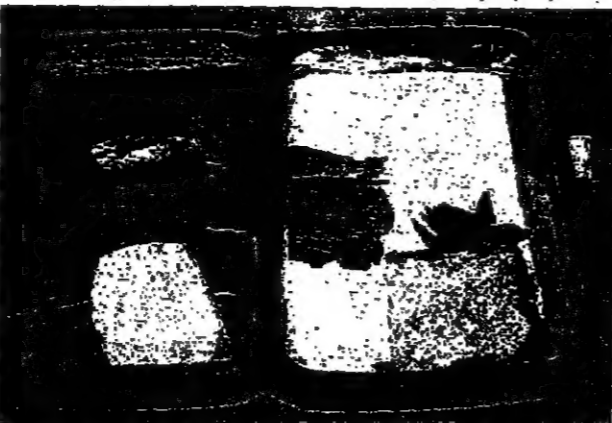
Westwood was caught as she brought more than two kilograms of cocaine hidden in the false bottom of her suitcase through the green channel at Heathrow airport last April. She was part of a "large and sophisticated" ring of smugglers, which included three accomplices who were sentenced alongside her yesterday at Isleworth Crown Court.

The court was told Westwood had accepted a free holiday to Trinidad last year and had stayed at a Holiday Inn in the capital, Port of Spain. On April 8, police at Tobago airport watched as she checked in a suitcase. Some distance behind her, Anthony Walker, an accomplice, was carrying a similar case. The two ignored each other but were later seen talking.

They were shadowed by Lancelot Wallace and Cedric Edwards, both from Lewisham, southeast London, who acted as minders to see the bags safely into Britain. Westwood and Walker tried to disguise their route to Britain by travelling from Trinidad via Frankfurt but police had already been alerted and sniffer dogs at Frankfurt airport discovered the 4.6 kg of cocaine divided between



Roger Westwood and his wife Susan attended every day of their daughter's trial. She smuggled cocaine into Britain in the suitcase below.



Westwood's and Walker's suitcases.

The group were followed to Heathrow airport, where Customs officers arrested them.

Giving evidence, Westwood told the court that she had had no idea that there were drugs in the suitcase, which was packed by someone else while she was in the shower.

While in the Caribbean, the

court was told, she had written a postcard to her best friend talking of "Geezers, gear, gorgeous gals and big ones".

Westwood was convicted last month after pleading not guilty. Yesterday in mitigation her counsel, Bernard Phelvin, said that she was a gullible and foolish girl who was easily led and had found it difficult to make friends. "She was a

lonely and desperate asthmatic child, finding it difficult to make friends perhaps in the way that teenagers and children do. Compromising her values was a way to achieve what popularity she could among her friends because of her background."

He said she had "dropped out" at a fairly early age and had also suffered violent abuse from her boyfriend. "Throughout this, those who are near to her have been and will be deeply affected by these matters."

"They have nevertheless stayed by her throughout. If it is possible at all not wholly to crush her spirit and destroy her personality, that is the course the court should take."

Judge Oppenheimer said he had taken into account her personal circumstances at the time she was lured into the smuggling trade. "In particular, I have considered your personal history, your background, the abusive relationships that you had before this offence was committed and the depression that you suffered," he said.

Nonetheless, he said, she was a "knowing" courier. He sentenced Tony Walker, 31, who pleaded guilty, to seven years in prison. Lancelot Wallace, 25, and Cedric Edwards, 34, were jailed for 12 years and 11 years respectively.

Westwood's mother Susan wept as her daughter was led away. The Westwoods have always maintained their daughter's innocence and say she was unknowingly lured into smuggling.

Westwood was educated at St Joseph's Convent School for Girls in Reading, Berkshire, which pledges to help girls "grow to maturity as Christians". She passed nine GCSEs but left aged 16.

When she married in her



Ex-convict girl Sara Westwood: claimed she was duped into carrying drugs

late teens, her father gave his blessing and threw a huge white wedding for her. She started training to become a nurse but gave it up when she became pregnant with her son Rees in 1994. Shortly afterwards her marriage collapsed and the couple separated in 1995.

Westwood then went to live

in a £70-a-week bedsit in Reading. Soon she was mixing with the crowd that was to lead to her downfall.

Her parents are now looking after their grandson at the family home in Sulham, Berkshire. After the verdict was announced last month, Mr Westwood told journalists he believed his daughter was the

innocent dupe of others. He said: "Sometimes naive, silly, headstrong and feckless, yes; but her main problem is that she has always been too trusting of the wrong type of people. Personally I have no doubt that she was taken advantage of." He and his family were too upset to comment after the sentence.

## French girls vanish on day trip to London

BY LIN JENKINS

THE distraught families of two French girls were helping to search West End streets in London yesterday in the hope of spotting the 16-year-olds, who went missing during a day trip from their home village.

The girls' visit on Wednesday was their first trip away from Grenay, near Lille. Police are worried that they may have been held against their will, but hope that the reason may prove less sinister. The attractions of the capital may have prompted them to miss the coach home. An incident room has been set up in Earls Court Road.

Laetitia Ranson and Anjelique Wozniak speak only a smattering of English. They had £10 each and no change of clothes when they failed to catch the coach home from Hanover Square. They were last seen about 4pm, window-shopping in Oxford Circus.

Marie-Christine Wozniak, 39, her husband Noel, 44, and their neighbours Jeanine, 43, and Jacky Ranson, 48, came to London on Thursday night. Mr Wozniak said: "We can't stop thinking about them. We wish to get out and walk the streets just to find our daughters."

A police spokesman said: "We are very concerned about them. They have never gone missing before and to deliberately run off would be out of character. We hope they just wanted to carry on with their adventure, but they may have been picked up by some of the unscrupulous people who watch for stray youngsters."

The girls are not thought to have fallen out with their families, nor did they have English boyfriends or pen-friends that they might have tried to visit. Both girls are white, about 5ft 2ins and fairly heavily built. Laetitia has shoulder-length black hair, while Anjelique has silver-blond hair and wears glasses.

## Nigerians free Briton held for eight weeks

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A BRITISH accountant imprisoned for eight weeks in Nigeria without charge was expected home today after intense diplomatic pressure ended his ordeal.

Bruce Henderson, 42, was released wearing the same clothes he wore when he was arrested by Nigerian military police in December on suspicion of spying as he attempted to cross the border from Cameroon. He was expected to fly out of Lagos last night to be reunited with his wife and three children in Aberdeenshire.

The British High Commission in Lagos reported that he seemed to be in good health. He told officials that he had been treated well during his detention.

Last night Mr Henderson told the BBC: "I am delighted to be free and I am grateful to those who helped to sustain me during this difficult time and those who have worked very hard to secure my release."

Hopes had risen last Friday that he would be freed, but

were dashed. From the time of his arrest he was refused access to consular officials.

Mr Henderson's wife Carol, 38, speaking from the family home in Chapel of Garioch, near Inverurie, said: "I'm so happy. I can't believe it — it has come from nowhere. After all the disappointment of the last week, it's wonderful."

Mrs Henderson was told by the Foreign Office at 11am yesterday that her husband was free and she was able to speak to him for the first time in almost two months, by telephone to the High Commission in Lagos. "He said he was well. He is very confused, but is looking forward to coming home. He was really surprised when I told him about how much the case had been in the news. He had no idea about the publicity," she said.

"We built up our hopes so much last week and then had such a huge let-down. I really wasn't expecting anything to happen so soon."

She immediately broke the good news to the couple's

children, Moira, 12, Craig, ten and Lindsay, seven.

Mr Henderson had been working in Cameroon since last July as the financial controller at Korup National Park. He was employed as an accountant by Hunting Technical Services, of Hemel Hempstead. When he was arrested, he was crossing the border into Nigeria to visit friends in Port Harcourt.

Speaking by telephone yesterday to his employer, Tom Boyd, a director at Hunting Technical Services, Mr Henderson said that he had been travelling with a Nigerian businessman by boat through the Bakassi peninsula, when he and his companion were arrested. "The military police thought he might be a security risk to Nigeria having travelled through an area disputed by the two countries," Mr Boyd said.

John Wattam, at the British High Commission in Lagos, said Mr Henderson had seen a doctor and had been debriefed by officials.

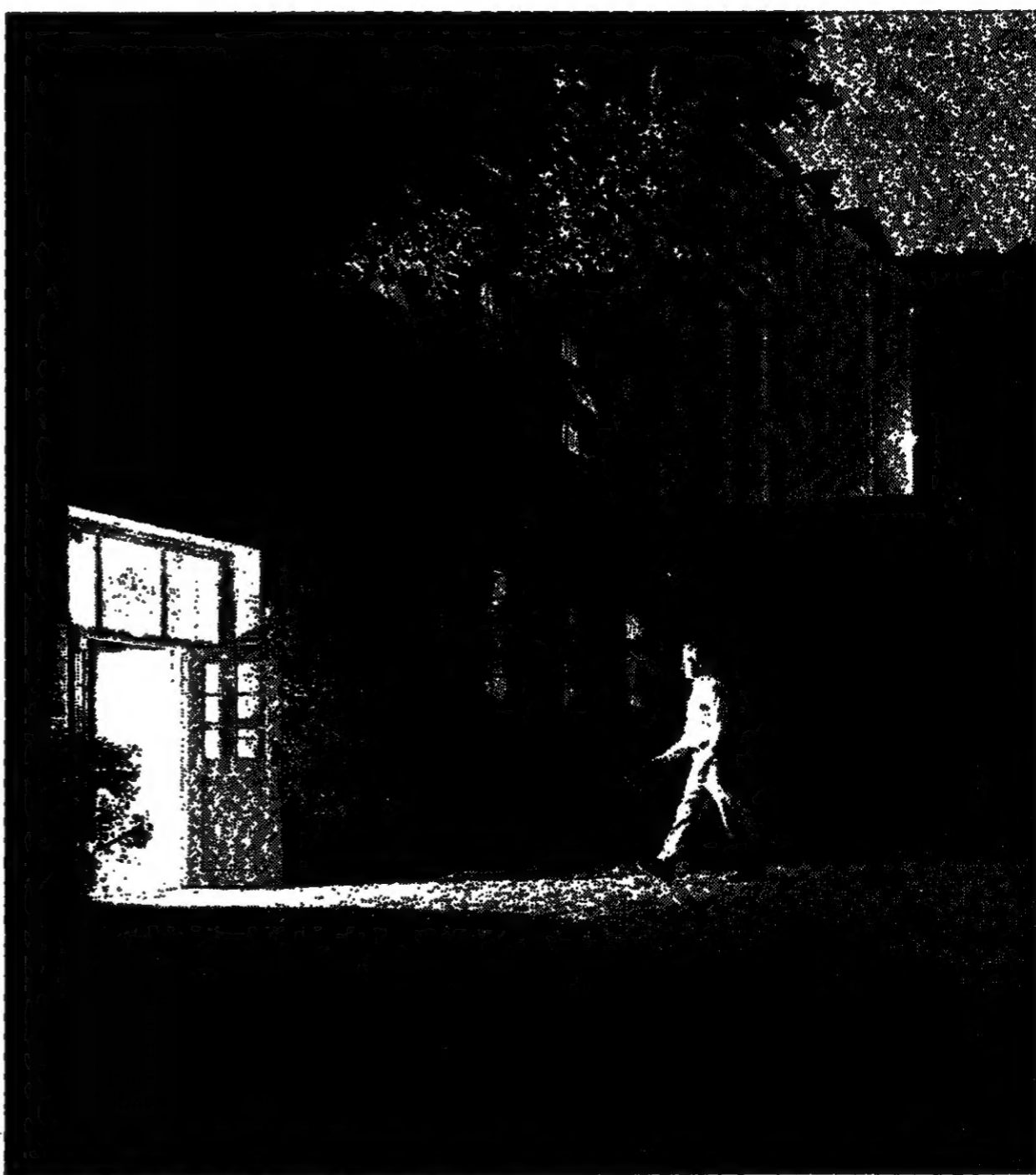
## BT told to put call girls back on line

BT WAS ordered yesterday to reconnect the telephone lines of prostitutes who leave cards in phone kiosks advertising their services. The telecommunications company had joined forces with other telephone providers and Westminster City Council, central London, last August to block calls to numbers listed on the cards.

The action was aimed at preventing prostitutes plastering booths with the cards, which often included explicit details. But the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) ruled that the agreement between the telephone providers breached competition laws because it had not been registered in advance.

David Greene, solicitor for the London Committee of Call Girls, said: "BT appears willing to do as it pleases in relation to customers and their rights."

A BT spokesman described the ruling as a blip and said that the company would resume disconnections soon after registering its policy with the OFT.



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

## Protest led by inventor's daughter halts £1m sale of Marconi archive

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

PLANS to auction the Marconi collection of historic documents and artefacts from the early days of radio have been shelved after protests led by Marconi's daughter, Princess Elettra Marconi-Giovanelli.

GEC-Marconi has reconsidered its decision to sell the collection at Christie's next month and the auction house has suspended printing of the catalogue. The company chose to sell the collection after deciding that building a museum to store and display it would cost far more than it was worth. The sale was expected to raise £1 million.

Opposition to the sale quickly grew in a flurry of letters to *The Times*. The principal criticism was that an auction would disperse the collection and make it inaccessible to scholars and the public.

An alternative to dispersal involving the Science Museum and perhaps other museums is now being discussed, with those close to the negotiations confident that a solution can be reached.

Princess Marconi-Giovanelli, who is in England to continue the campaign to keep the collection in Britain, has met Sir Neil Cossons, director of the Science Museum, and yesterday visited Chelmsford in Essex, where her father established the Marconi company to exploit his patents. She had a meeting at the offices of the borough council and later visited the GEC-Marconi plant.

She said: "The Science Museum is being very helpful. I am hoping that everything will go well, thanks to the pressure of opinion against the sale. My father's equipment belongs to England, and that is where it should stay."

The Science Museum and GEC issued a statement after the first meeting, saying that they believed that a basis existed for a solution "which will ensure that the Marconi Collection remains intact and in this country." Another statement was promised once further progress had been



Princess Elettra campaigning in Britain

achieved, "when the company would expect to be in a position to withdraw the collection from public sale." That is not expected for a week or two.

Any solution short of selling the collection is likely to involve the injection of money from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Christie's, which has already spent time cataloguing the collection, will need to be reimbursed.

Guglielmo Marconi came to Britain as a young man in 1896, after carrying out successful radio experiments in his parents' home in Italy. He was supported by the Post Office and within a few years had demonstrated long-range transmission of radio waves.

The collection owned by GEC-Marconi has been stored at Chelmsford for many years. Documents include "Marconigrams" sent by the doomed liner *Titanic* as it sank in the north Atlantic after hitting an iceberg in 1912. The final message read: "Sinking. We are putting passengers off in small boats. Weather clear."

The invention of radio is a confusing subject. Several scientists demonstrated the transmission of radio waves, but none was able to commercialise the invention until Marconi arrived from Bologna. His success was rapid, with the first radio signals being sent across the English Channel in 1898, and across the Atlantic in 1901. He won the Nobel Prize for physics in 1909.

هكذا من راصد

# Catwalk kittens take controversy in their stride



Uniform appearance: Eva Arnold, left, and Charlene O'Haire dressed in their school clothes

BY DAREH GREGORIAN  
AND GRACE BRADBERRY

**SCHOOLGIRLS** who will star in Vivienne Westwood's fashion show tomorrow — one of them as young as 13 — are not letting controversy wear them down.

While Lady Olga Maitland, the MP and a sponsor of the Conservative Family Campaign, said that 20 girls aged 13 to 17 acting as models was "frankly not right", 15-year-old Eva Arnold maintained there was no cause for alarm.

While some of Ms Westwood's designs were, Eva agreed, "quite raunchy", the clothes in which she would appear for the start of London Fashion Week were not. Ms Westwood, who is known for provocative designs, including rubber skirts and fake-fur G-strings, will feature the girls in a mock debutantes' ball at the Dorchester.

The girls were recruited from model agencies and two drama schools, the Sylvia Young Theatre School and The Arts Educational School, London.

Charlotte, the 13-year-old, is a professional model chosen from the books of Spirit Model Agency, which also represents Jodie Kidd, whose extremely thin appearance caused comment two years ago.

Jonathan Phang, who manages Charlotte and Jodie Kidd, said:

"The reason I'm letting her do this show is because all the girls who are doing it are young."

Eva's fellow pupils from The Arts Educational School, Sarah Watkins, 17, and Charlene O'Haire, 16, said there was no need for controversy. Eva's mother Lynn said that she was delighted Eva was in the show, although she admitted that she had had some worries.

"It's a concern when your daughter is quite young," Mrs Arnold said. "My main concern is that it focuses on image more than spirit and soul. Young people are under a terrible pressure when it comes to image. But I trust Eva. I think she's sensible."

Westwood's show comes after complaints that the fashion industry exploits schoolgirls. Lady Olga, MP for Sutton and Cheam, said: "I totally disapprove of young girls being used for this kind of show. To abuse teenagers because they look innocent is frankly not right. There are perfectly suitable adult models, so there is just no need for this. I think it's quite awful."

Wayne Hemingway, the chairman and founder of the fashion company Red Or Dead, which is also showing at the fashion week, said: "It's a question of where you draw the line. I think the collection that Vivienne is showing is

for young people, and so using young models is perfectly all right. The only time there would be a problem is if young girls were wearing clothes that were sexy or exposing flesh or midriff."

Lella Cerullo, a spokeswoman for the Ms Westwood, said: "We're not putting the girls into the show to cause a sensation. We want to prove a point that a young girl can look chic and sophisticated. Young people love to dress like rebels, but they all wind up dressing like each other. These days, looking prim is rebellious." Miss Cerullo said the girls would wear "lovely tailored suits".

However, Westwood's managing director, the Italian businessman Carlo D'Amario, said: "The collection is very sexy. What else do you expect of Vivienne?"

For the audition, the girls of The Arts Educational School were asked to wear dance leotards and to walk the length of the school hall. Brenda Gray, the school's registrar, said: "The show's organisers wanted girls between the ages of 14 and 18. They wanted tall, slim, typical English rose types. As long as the clothing is suitable, it will be a good experience for them."

Vivienne Westwood made her name in the 1970s, when she and her partner Malcolm McLaren opened a boutique.



Role models: Eva and Charlene sampling Vivienne Westwood outfits at Liberty's in central London

## Water experts demand a ban on new homes

BY NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

**WATER** resources are so stretched that no more houses should be built in part of the South and East of Britain, experts in the industry said yesterday.

Ray Tennant, chairman of the Water Companies Association, insisted the projected need for 4.4 million new households by 2016 could prove a disaster in areas such as Hampshire, east and west Sussex, Kent and East Anglia.

"Certainly in areas like East and West Sussex we will find it difficult to supply new townships. There are no major rivers and most water comes from boreholes in the South Downs which are being fully exploited," he said. The Association will be objecting to future schemes and were already holding urgent talks with county planning chiefs across southern England.

Mr Tennant, who is a director of Mid Southern and South East Water, said projects were already in the pipeline which were causing alarm. "There are proposals for a township of 10,000 properties between Lewis and Eastbourne. In north Hampshire there are plans for a new town," he said.

"Every new home needs one, two, maybe three toilets, a

new garden and a new car that needs washing."

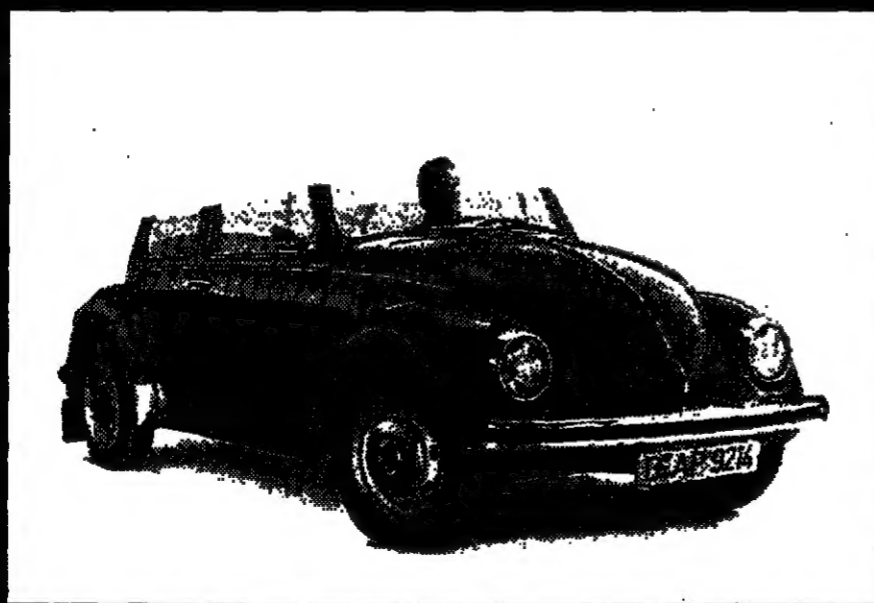
The fears over the Government's new household projections come in advance of a meeting on Monday, organised by the WCA, which represents the smaller water supply firms. The meeting is aimed at solving Britain's water problems into the next century.

"We cannot run businesses the way we are at the moment, constantly on the edge of a crisis," said Mr Tennant. The meeting has secured the backing of the Environment Agency, environmental groups who fear Britain's wetlands and rivers are being run dry by a combination of heavy abstraction and surging demand, and all 27 of the water companies in England and Wales.

It follows several dry years and forecasts that global warming will make water even more scarce.

Mike Walker, the WCA's head of policy, said that the time had come to draft a national strategy which balanced the interests of consumers, government, green groups and water companies. The WCA also wants a study into the need for new reservoirs and underground storage systems.

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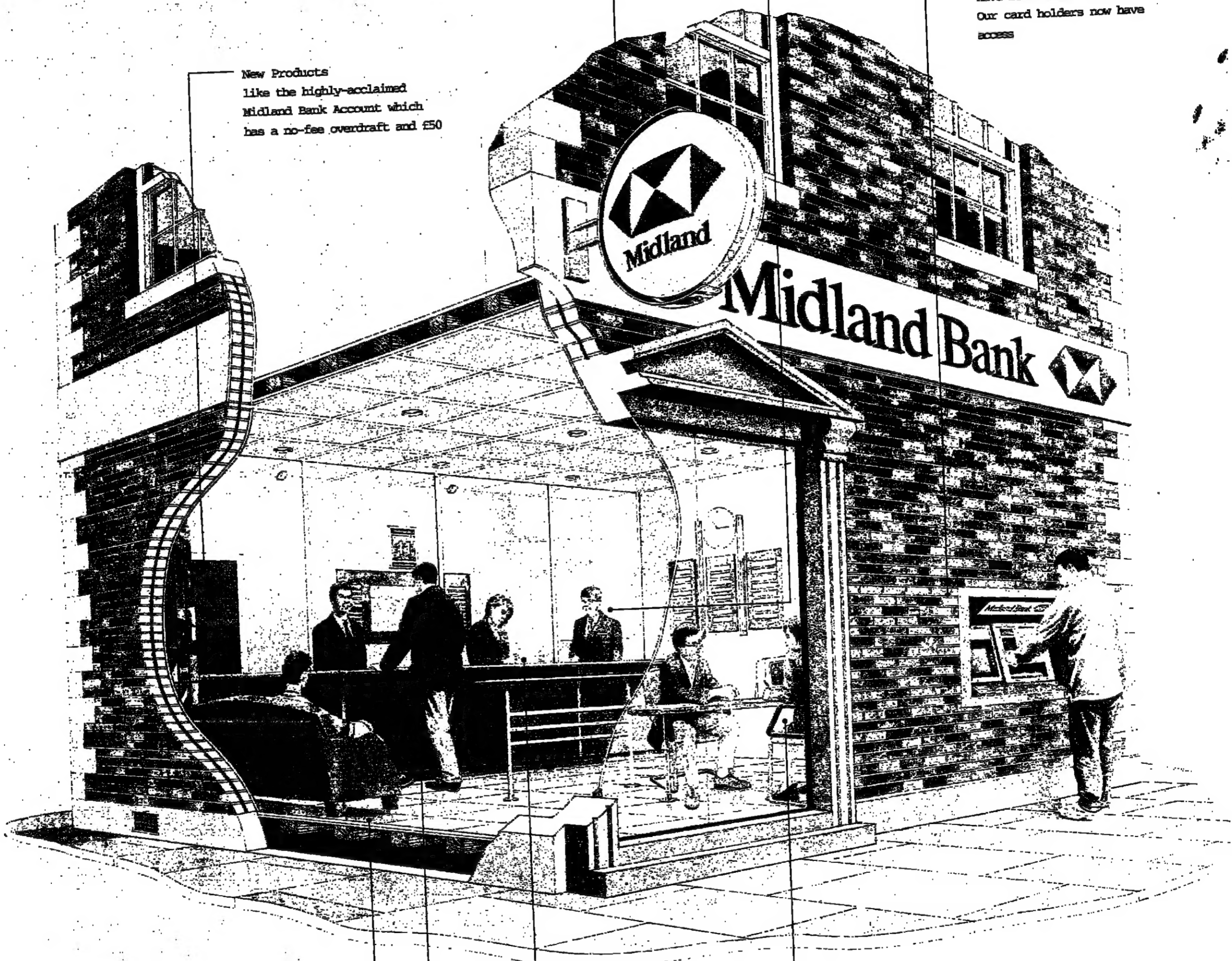
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# Now released men face the ordeal of freedom



14 years after being wrongly convicted for two 1974 pub bombings in which seven people died, said released prisoners felt like orphans. "The people that Vincent, Michael and James are coming out to have no idea of the allowances they will have to make. There is no basic love or compassion shown in prison," he said.

Among the 200 people in court were Sara Thornton, convicted of murdering her

Frederick Whelan, 65, was jailed last month for a year by Leicester Crown Court for attempting to smuggle £140 worth of cannabis resin into Gartree Prison, after his stepson had asked for a "smoke" to relieve his boredom. He had no previous convictions.

Michael Hickey called yesterday for his stepfather to be released. "I smoke cannabis. I learnt it in prison. I needed some drugs to stay alive and my stepfather was trying to help me," he said.



BY RICHARD DUCE

In a rare interview last year, Mr Bridgewater said: "Just occasionally you can't help but wonder what the boy would be doing now. You can never get over something like this and you can't describe what it does to you. We were convinced at the time that those men did it. Nothing <sup>was</sup> <sup>to</sup> be done. I was a friend. Joe Goodaker, a neighbour, whose son I used to play with Carl, said: 'It is always displayed in banner headlines as the Bridgewater case', which brings it back for them each time. If the police tell you <sup>that</sup> <sup>you</sup> <sup>will</sup> <sup>lose</sup> <sup>your</sup> <sup>child</sup> <sup>then</sup> <sup>you</sup> <sup>ve</sup> <sup>got</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>believe</sup> <sup>them</sup>."

since has changed our minds," says Tongue said yesterday. "There will be disagreement about the guilt or innocence of these three men but the one thing about which there will be no argument is the terrible situation that still remains for the parents-of-Carl Bridgewater. The sad reality is their wound could be left open for the rest of their lives if there is no positive resolution."

Mr Bridgewater, an engineer, and his wife still live in the next terraced house from where the car was found on the embankment round in 1978. Their other children, Philip and Jane, have moved away. The family home is a mile from Yew Tree Farm where Carl was killed. The farm is derelict after being bought by the council to make way for a relief road.

Mr and Mrs Bridgewater left their home in the early hours yesterday to stay with friends. Joe Goodaker, a neighbour, whose son landed to play with Carl, said: "It is always displayed in the local 'tadlers' as 'Carl Bridgewater's case, which brings it back to them each time. If the police tell you who killed your child then you've got to believe them."

[illegible]

Former policeman who interviewed Pat Molloy is now a director in a Midlands security firm

## Ex-detective stays silent over forgery accusation

BY RICHARD DUCE AND RUSSELL JENKINS

THE surviving detective constable accused of faking Vincent Hickey's confession was refusing to make a statement of his own yesterday, as allegations of police involvement in the misreporting of justice provoked an outcry.

Graham Leake, 60, stayed behind an anonymous wooden door at his security company, Heritage Security Services, in Sedgley, West Midlands. A woman employee said over the intercom: "He has got nothing to say."

Since the interview with Pat Molloy almost 19 years ago, Mr Leake has become a director in the security guard firm, and now lives in a £200,000 executive home in Perton, overlooking countryside near Wolverhampton.

His partner in the West Midlands force, DC John Perkins, died from cancer in 1993, aged 46, a discredited and disgraced man. His wife June always complained that pressure brought to bear by the

Bridgewater campaigners contributed to his early death. Mr Perkins had a hand in a significant proportion of the cases conducted by the West Midlands serious crimes squad that West Yorkshire Police were called in to review, and was once fined for falsifying evidence. The squad was disbanded after allegations that officers fabricated confessions and planted evidence in 23 cases during the 1980s. Members of the squad had also been involved in the convictions of the six men falsely imprisoned for 17 years for the Birmingham pub bombings.

When the Bridgewater Four lost their first appeal in 1989, Staffordshire Police — responsible for the murder investigation — hailed the exposure of the "issue of lies and half-truths" put forward to discredit their evidence. Yesterday the Staffordshire and West Midlands forces said they were waiting for the full



Leake: he had nothing to say

appeal evidence to emerge before commenting officially. John Giffard, Staffordshire Chief Constable, said: "This case has still to be heard by the Court of Appeal and, at this stage, no further comment can be made." A spokesman for the West Midlands said that the Merseyside Police inquiry into this case is continuing

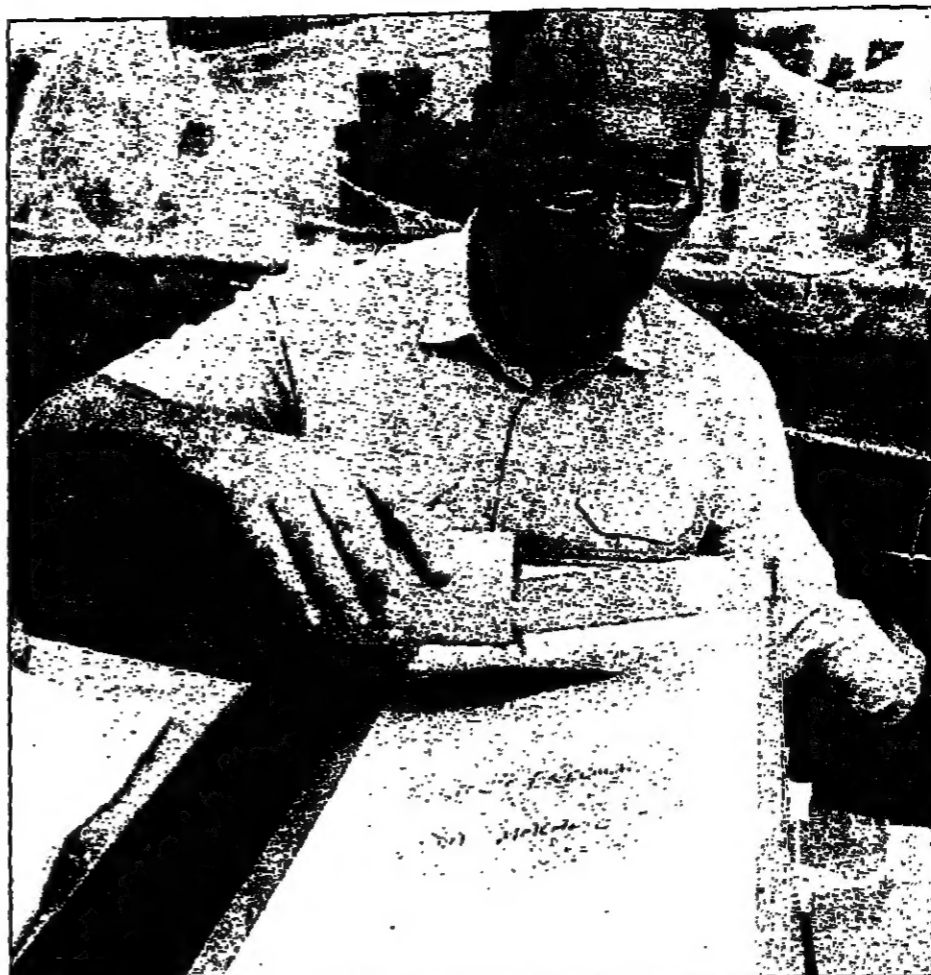
and that they would receive the full support and co-operation of the force.

In the Court of Appeal, Michael Mansfield, QC, speaking for the defendants, said that a forged confession purporting to have been signed by Vincent Hickey was almost certainly written by Mr Leake, and that Mr Perkins forged the signature.

Mr Molloy, who died in prison in 1981, always maintained that he had been shown just such a confession by police, but was not believed. Neither Mr Perkins nor Mr Leake had anything to do with interviewing Hickey, who was being dealt with separately at another police station.

Last year, Mr Leake said: "If the judges [in the appeal] ask me, I certainly have things to say and, believe me, I will tell them about what some of us think."

Last night he arrived back at his home with his wife Anne, and again refused to comment on the court proceedings.



A manufacturer's representative demonstrating the Esda machine in action

## Evidence

Continued from page 1  
imprint was discovered only two weeks ago when Jim Nichol, the convicted men's solicitor, was reviewing the evidence while preparing for the appeal due to start in April. And when Mr Nichol had the handwriting on the Hickey "statement" examined, his suspicions appeared to have been borne out.

Molloy's interview was carried out by Detective Constable Graham Leake and Detective Constable John Perkins with Detective Sergeant John Robbins sitting outside.

"The impressions in the body of the caption are in handwriting that certainly looks very similar to DC Leake and the impressions in the signature of Vincent Hickey — which is certainly not a genuine Vincent Hickey signature — are very like the handwriting of DC Perkins", Mr Roberts told the court yesterday.

The Crown accepted that there was "no other sensible explanation that we can properly put forward" other than that the Hickey confession was a forgery.

Constable Perkins, who has since died, was disgraced in 1989 after he was caught falsifying a statement.

## Lawyer who never doubted the four were innocent

BY RICHARD FORD

FOR Jim Nichol, the former pit worker, printer and now solicitor to the Bridgewater Three, yesterday's decision is a vindication of 14 years of largely unpaid work.

He is one of a handful of solicitors whose belief in their clients' innocence has made them dogged campaigners for justice. He also helped to clear Eddie Browning of the murder of Marie Wilkes, and Colin Wallace, the former army information officer, of manslaughter. He has been pursuing the Bridgewater case since 1983, when he was first put in touch with Ann Whelan, mother of Michael Hickey, by the journalist Paul Foot. Mr

Nichol, 51, said: "I looked at the case and just believed they were innocent. That is why I do it."

He has worked unpaid on the case, overcoming setbacks such as the announcement by the then Home Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, in 1993 that he would not refer the case to the Court of Appeal.

Mr Nichol was destined to follow his father at North Wallcliffe colliery on the edge of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. His parents died when he was a boy and he was brought up by an aunt and uncle in Lenington, near Newcastle and left school at 15. Having contracted tuberculosis, he could not go underground, as his father had done, and worked above ground at the pit.

He became a printer and became a solicitor only at the age of 36, after studying law at night school. He would still like to go to university.

At his practice in Finsbury Park, north London, his partner is Carolyn Taylor, niece of the former Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor of Gossforth. Ms Taylor said: "Jim is driven. He takes the work home."

Mr Nichol, whose daughter was in court to witness yesterday's triumph, said that "gut instinct" had made him look again at the confession that had proved conclusive to undermining the Crown's case.



Nichol: studied law at night school

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TWO of Britain's leading crime novelists, Minette Walters (above) and Colin Dexter, will discuss the art of crime writing at a Times/Dillons Crime Forum at 7.30pm on Tuesday, March 4, at the Institute of Education, London WC1. The audience will also have a chance to question the authors. Dexter's books are worldwide bestsellers and his Inspector Morse television series topped the ratings with 18 million viewers. Minette Walters has also had television success with *The Sculptress*, which will be followed in May by *The Ice House*.

The admission price includes £2 off the price of Walters's new novel *The Echo* (£16.99) and £1 off Dexter's *Death Is Now My Neighbour* (£9.99), both published by Macmillan. For full details of how to book, see coupon (below).

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Cleveland's shock tactics to curb youth crime may be adopted by other police forces

## Glimpse of prison hell cuts teenage reoffending by half

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE reality of prison life is being brought home to young offenders on Teesside. They are shown the slopping-out bucket, the stained prison-issue underwear and the metal food trays on which custard flows into gravy as the inmate carries his meal back to his cell, perhaps up three flights of stairs.

Sexual abuse and constant obscenity are also discussed as is the prevalence of bullying and assault.

The Cleveland police project that uses shock tactics to stop young people reoffending is being studied by the Home Office and other forces. Graphic descriptions of the dehumanising and degrading experience of doing time has cut the level of repeat offending by teenagers in Stockton by more than half.

Just as the 17th-century astronomer Galileo recanted and withdrew his beliefs that the Earth was not the centre of the Universe when shown the torture instruments of the Inquisition, the teenagers are taking the warnings about prison to heart.

Inspector David Walker,

Stockton's community liaison officer, said: "At the end of one session one boy's mother was nearly sick at what she had been shown. Another woman was sobbing and her son was comforting her in his arms. He promised her he would never do anything to get himself locked away. It has been a tremendous success."

The Stockton scheme relies on two prison officers, Andy Mitchell and Bob Puckie, from the nearby Holme House jail, giving their time voluntarily. The Prison Service is considering a request from the Inspector of Constabulary to dedicate staff full-time to run similar projects elsewhere.

The scheme — "Prison, Me? No Way" — was tested for three months last year and has now been adopted as permanent policy by Cleveland police. During the trial period 31 young offenders attended Sunday morning sessions at Stockton police station. Of those attending only five have reoffended, against the normal reoffending rate of 37 per cent.

The scheme is aimed at 12 to 17-year-olds who have already

received one caution for an offence. Those caught a second time are given the option of facing the courts or attending the "warts-and-all" course.

They and their families watch a 45-minute video shot inside Hull prison that follows an offender as he enters the system. It begins with him being stripped and examined and given regulation prison clothes. The daily routine inside is then shown with a full stereo system amplifying the sounds of incarceration.

Afterwards the two prison officers talk frankly about prison life, including graphic details of the drugs, the gangs and even the sexual assaults. Mr Walker said: "The officers tell them not to believe anything their mates have told them about it being a cushy life. In Holme House there are two pool tables for 750 people. Only the bullies get to play on those. The TV goes on from 5.30 to 7.30 and only the bullies get to watch it."

Inspector Ian Birch, the head of Stockton district, said: "Any youngsters tempted to re-offend are soon put off when they have seen the video

and have got a taste of life behind bars. Another bonus is that other members of the family of young offenders, including brothers, sisters and friends, also attend the scheme on a voluntary basis. It means peer pressure to commit crime may be reduced as more

people than anticipated know the consequences of committing crime.

"Youngsters are told straight away that after a second caution they have no more chances and that they will be dealt with by the courts. But we find we are

getting the message home and the scheme is working."

The programme costs about £160 a person per year, compared to the £1,500 a week it costs to keep an offender in prison.

Prison Officer Mitchell said: "Some people think prison is

watching TV all day long but that's not the case. Youngsters are shown the indignity of life in prison and what it is like to eat and sleep in a cell where you also have a toilet. Offenders are shocked by what they see and results show the project is working."



Hard-hitting: Prison Officer Andy Mitchell underlines the realities of prison to young first offenders in Stockton

## Eurotunnel in freight safety talks

Eurotunnel has begun talks with safety officials about restarting freight shuttle services. But the company refused to comment on a French press report that it had decided against safer but more expensive shuttle wagons. The safety of the open wagons was questioned after drivers were hurt in a fire on a freight shuttle last November. Eurotunnel said that it had submitted only draft proposals to the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority.

## Fan assaulted

James "Five Bellies" Gardner, a friend of the Glasgow Rangers player Paul Gascoigne, was fined £500 at Paisley Sheriff Court for assaulting a Celtic fan in a pub. The Rangers player Charlie Miller and Steven McDemott were cleared of charges arising from the incident.

## Freedom plea

Alexander Hall, 42, a former Strathclyde policeman jailed for life in 1988 for slitting the throat of a teenage girl, will ask for temporary freedom next month pending appeal. Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, has agreed to have the case re-examined in the light of new evidence.

## Yoghurt recall

Safeway has recalled 150g pots of its own-brand toffee and hazelnut yoghurts because the contents may have been mistakenly switched. Tesco is also recalling jars of its Chocolate Swirl and 325g and 200g jars of Chocolate Spread because they may contain traces of nut.

## Blackmail case

A man who threatened to cut the throat of a Trafalgar Square ice cream vendor unless he paid £7,000 protection money was jailed for 33 months. Bob Darke, 37, of Kennington, south London, pleaded guilty to blackmail. His partner was earlier jailed for four years.

## Baby snatcher

Sarah Allen, 24, of Maybush, Southampton, admitted four charges of trying to abduct babies and asked for nine other cases to be considered at Winchester Crown Court. She was placed on probation providing she undergoes psychiatric treatment.

## Road 'shooting'

A "stressed" driver who fired an imitation gun at another motorist was jailed for four months. Paul Marchant, 27, of Whiteley Wood, Reading, fired a blank from his car as the other man ran up to him after problems in overtaking.

## Catholic pupils ran drugs ring

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

PARENTS at a Roman Catholic independent school were advised yesterday to "keep their wits about them" after the headmaster broke up a drugs ring involving 20 pupils.

Two fifth-form boys were expelled and 18 suspended over their involvement in supplying and using cannabis at St Bede's College in Manchester. The school joins a long list of leading schools that have disciplined students for drug-taking in the past year. They include Eton and Wellington College in Berkshire, and the King's School at Rochester, Kent.

Drugs have become so commonplace in schools that the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference of leading independent schools has suggested that pupils caught using cannabis should be given a second chance. Exeter University researchers said last year that a survey of 50,000 teenagers found that a third of boys and more than a quarter of girls aged 15 and 16 claimed to have tried cannabis. John

Byrne, headmaster of St Bede's, has called in counsellors from Lifeline, an agency that deals with heroin addicts, to lecture the college's 1,020 pupils. In a letter to parents, Mr Byrne says: "The governors and the staff are at one in deploring the drugs culture which bedevils Greater Manchester. We treat with contempt the notion of the so-called soft drug."

He added: "I must respectfully ask parents to keep their wits about them with regard to their children's behaviour and social habits. You are only too aware that many of the pubs and clubs are the refuges of the drugs pushers. But equally worrying is the prevalence of drugs at parties where peer pressure and fear of ostracism may induce the naive teenager to experiment."

Every pupil will be warned of the dangers of drugs when they return to college — motto: *Nunquam Otio Torpet* (Never Allow Yourself To Be Lazy) — on Monday after the half-term break.

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RAF Stenigot, on the Lincolnshire Wolds, is regarded as the best remaining example of the 20 radar sites constructed along the east coast in 1939. The Chain Home system, as it was known, played a vital role in the Battle of Britain and other RAF operations during the Second World War.

Stenigot, between Louth and Horncastle, was chosen because it occupies the highest point along the east coast between Yorkshire and Kent. Stenigot was also used as a Gee Station, with secret electronic technology which directed British bomber crews to enemy targets with pinpoint accuracy. Now its galvanised steel transmitter tower and two buildings have been Grade II listed.

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THE TIMES SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22 1997

# New hand finds Blue Peter still on course after 39 years

BY JOE JOSEPH

IF THE names Christopher Trace, Valerie Singleton, John Noakes and Peter Purves mean anything to you, then you probably won't care much that Richard Bacon, a former local radio reporter, was yesterday named the 24th presenter of *Blue Peter*.

Bacon replaces the resident hunk, Tim Vincent, on what remains the BBC's flagship children's programme after nearly 40 years, when most people might have assumed that there just wasn't any crepe paper left to glue, any tall building that hadn't been abseiled, or any animal that hadn't been allowed to poop on the studio floor.

Christopher Trace and Lella Williams were the first presenters in 1958. Although the flesh in front of the camera has changed over the years, the spirit of *Blue Peter* — a programme which has given "sticky-back plastic" and "Get down Shep!" an almost Proustian underflow for generations of children — has stayed the same.

Bacon's audition involved making a Christmas card, bouncing on a trampoline and handling a snake — tricks



Model presenters: Christopher Trace, Valerie Singleton and, right, John Noakes in 1966

you would be asked to perform at a job interview only for *Blue Peter* or for one of the more progressive merchant banks.

Bacon, 21, has already been given his first television assignment: a trip to the jungle of Brunel for military training. Climbing remote mountains and building Thunderbirds out of old toilet rolls and egg boxes is apparently what Bacon had been aiming to do all his short life, with pretty much the same passion that Tony Blair

has been aiming to be Prime Minister.

"I remember seeing Caron Keating filming *Blue Peter* when I was with my family," Bacon said. "I was about ten, but I had dreams that I would be one day. I couldn't believe it when I heard I had got the job. I've had to keep it a secret for over a week. When I rang my mum she jumped up and down screaming with excitement."

Oliver Macfarlane, the editor of *Blue Peter*, said: "We looked far and wide for our

new presenter. Richard is hugely likeable and that immediately came across in the audition. He's a good presenter and should be able to cope with most things that *Blue Peter* throws at him."

Bacon, born in Mansfield, began his career as a reporter at BBC Radio Nottingham before moving to the cable channel Live TV. At *Blue Peter* he will join on the sofa Stuart Miles, Katy Hill and Romana D'Annunzio — names currently recognisable only to those still in short trousers or Spice Girls T-shirts, but probably not for long.

Although the show's early presenters hung around pasting crepe paper onto empty washing-up liquid bottles for long enough to make their woolly jumpers look lived-in, the current crop often stays only as long as it takes to get a sexier offer from elsewhere.

Most famously, Anthea Turner went onwards and upwards — if not always happily, as her high profile and even higher salary attracted a certain amount of ridicule, not least from some of her subsequent co-presenters, such as Eamonn Holmes. Actor-cum-presenter Tim Vincent, whom Bacon is replacing,



Richard Bacon meeting his new colleagues, from left: Romana D'Annunzio, Stuart Miles and Katy Hill

has appeared in *The Clothes Show* and the drama series *Dangerfield*. He has also been a model.

*Blue Peter* has lived on long after most of the competition.

Thames launched *Maggie* in 1968 with Tony Eastable, Peter Brady and Susan Stranks, who gave the programme a sexier accent than had been the norm on children's television. But they were pitted, in that year, against the *Blue Peter* dream team of Singleton, Noakes, Purves and Petra the dog.

Also, in Noakes, *Blue Peter* had an amiable maniac who was willing to undertake any assignment — however hazardous or barmy — as long as he could be accompanied by a camera and his dog, Shep.

## Top 40 is being manipulated, says Radio 1

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

RECORD companies are giving away so many free and discounted singles to boost their success in the Top 40 that even the BBC says the chart has lost its credibility.

An exposé of the practice is to be broadcast on Radio 1 tomorrow night, after the chart programme. The Top 40 is compiled from figures for the number of records sold each week while other charts are based on the amount of airtime each single receives. Investigators for the programme, *Hyping the Hits*, found that shops were being given free records so that they could sell them at discounts and push them into the number one slot. The records were then sold at normal price.

A number-one hit guarantees publicity for a group that will assist in much more lucrative album sales.

Shops were asked how it was possible to sell CD singles for just 99p when the normal price was around £3. It emerged that record companies were offering them up to three free singles for every one the shop bought and two shops were even given completely free stock.

In November last year Mark Owen, the former Take That singer, saw his single

shoot straight to number 2. One shop was offered one free record for every one it bought. But when these failed to sell, the whole stock was given free.

John Preston, of the British Phonographic Institute and BMG Records (UK), to which Owen is signed, said: "Some of those records may have been given away but not in the kind of quantities that our competitors have." He said that 300,000 to 400,000 copies of that record had been sold. "I don't expect our discounts were more than about 15 or 20 per cent but I honestly don't know. That kind of discount is considered normal. A game of chicken is going on. Are we first to decide we are not doing what our competitors are doing?"

Last night Trevor Dann, head of BBC Music Entertainment, said: "The only way you can tell how popular a record is is how slowly it goes down the chart," he said.

He said listeners had a right to know what was happening. "The public may not be aware of how the chart is manipulated. We have an obligation to let them know."

The BBC is reviewing, with the record industry, the way the chart is compiled.

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# Chief Rabbi places morality firmly on the political agenda



By RUTH GLEDHILL AND DANIEL JOHNSON

THE Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, today calls on the political parties to restore the Judeo-Christian tradition to the centre of British national life. With his book, *The Politics of Hope*, Dr Sacks attempts to place morality on the agenda of political debate and advocates a liberal society rooted in communal and family values.

Dr Sacks argues that the views he holds are also being adopted "by politicians at both ends of the political spectrum — by Democrats

and Republicans in America, and members of the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties in Britain" — but his scathing attack on contemporary Britain will be particularly welcome to the Labour leader, Tony Blair. He shares the Chief Rabbi's interest in the American communitarian movement and his rejection both of "the politics of collectivism and the politics of private initiative".

His critique of Thatcherism and the right-wing libertarianism of the

1980s is in marked contrast to the philosophy of his predecessor, Lord Jakobovits, who was close to Margaret Thatcher and espoused many of her political views. But Dr Sacks is also scathing in his treatment of the permissive society of the 1960s and the libertarians of the left.

The timing, so near to an election, of the first purely political work by a Chief Rabbi, and the first by the head of any British religious denomination for more than 50 years, will be seen as provocative by Dr Sacks's critics among orthodox Jews.

In his book, serialised in *The*

*Times* from today, Dr Sacks mounts a critique of Margaret Thatcher's oft-quoted statement: "There is no such thing as society." Dr Sacks comments: "This is a tenable view and there is only one thing to be said against it. It has been tried and it has failed."

He adds: "It has given rise to a social order — or more precisely, to a social disorder — more bleak than any within living memory. Today many parts of Britain and America are marked by vandalism, violent crime and a loss of civility; by the breakdown of the family and the

widespread neglect of children; by an erosion of trust and a general loss of faith in the power of governments to cure some of our most deep-seated problems."

Dr Sacks says higher-income groups benefited disproportionately from the tax-cutting programmes of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, but argues that the real inequality of post-industrial capitalism goes far deeper. He says the "new rich" no longer mix with the poor as, for example, lords mixed with serfs in earlier ages. "Social geography is gradual-

ly polarising between the urban ghetto and the gilded ghetto," he argues.

Dr Sacks says he is not arguing for a return to Victorian values. "There is nothing to be said for marching boldly towards the past," he says. "What the Victorians taught us is that whatever we seek collectively to create, the way to do so is to focus on character and on the institutions that promote a strong sense of personhood and social concern."

Dr Jonathan Sacks, page 22

## Archbishop of York opposes US-style tele-evangelism

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Archbishop of York, Dr David Hope, said yesterday he would strongly oppose the establishment of fundamentalist American-style television stations in Britain.

Dr Hope had helped to promote the London Christian Radio Station, but said that it was "ecumenically broad-based", different in tone and content from those he was criticising. He particularly criticised Mother Angelina, the Roman Catholic broadcaster who has a huge following for her radio station in America with her denunciations of the world and the flesh. He did not want to see such tele-evangelist stations in this

country and argued that the Church should rather seek to convey its message through the mainstream media.

Typical of the kind of American tele-evangelist who would be opposed by the Archbishop was Jim Bakker, who, with his wife, found wealth and fame in the 1980s with their upbeat message. In his autobiography, Mr Bakker charts his downfall after the press learnt of his adultery. Jimmy Swaggart, another American tele-evangelist, resigned after admitting that he had slept with a prostitute.

Radio and television could help to pose the right questions, he said, arguing for the preservation of straightfor-

ward "religious" programmes such as BBC Radio 3's *Choral Evensong* and BBC1's *Songs of Praise*. "These are still remarkably valid, and faith-creating and faith-provoking. They still command considerable audience figures."

There was a "spiritual hunger" that the Church had to learn to address through the media. "Everywhere I go I hear a similar story: that people want to believe in God, in Heaven; in something other than the rather shallow and predictable existence which can so easily become the norm, and that more than 70 per cent of the population say they believe in God."

This presented a challenge



The American tele-evangelists Jim Bakker, with his wife Tammy, and Jimmy Swaggart, with his wife Frances. Both men faced scandal

for the Church, operating as it did in a culture where the answers to life's questions had to be presented in a few sentences. Dr Hope, addressing journalists, clergy and students, at Newcastle University, said it was essential that bishops and other church leaders "seize the agenda".

"I acknowledge the need for us within the Church of England to be media-aware — less naive, more ready to understand the complexities of a media-saturated world." The mobile phone-carrying Archbishop has two of the most astute religious public relations officials in the Church of

England — Raymond Barker and the Rev Rob Marshall.

Dr Hope admitted that he was not a regular listener to BBC Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* or *Prayer for the Day*, but said that his local radio station in York had a three-hour Sunday morning programme which was "stimulating, varied and lively".

The numbers listening to religious programmes on a Sunday, such as the one in York and BBC Radio 4's *Sunday* were remarkable, he said.

Dr Hope said: "There are those who conclude the whole [media] show to be so corrupting that the Christian and the

faith community should shun them entirely. Indeed, I know those whose basic policy is to say nothing; 'not available', 'no comment'. This, in my view, is unrealistic."

At Your Service, Weekend, page 15

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## Let's not shop until we drop but rather care until we share

THIS weekend many Christian communities are entering the second week of Lent. For 40 days, as followers of Christ, we recall and re-enact the time He spent in prayer and fasting in the desert. For Jesus, this was a Spirit-led preparation for his public ministry, death and Resurrection. For us, it is a time of preparation for celebration of that death and Resurrection in our Easter festivities.

The language associated with Lent tells its own story. The name comes from the Anglo-Saxon word denoting the lengthening of the days as spring gains a hold. On the eve of Lent comes the carnival of Mardi Gras. "Carnival" comes from "carnus" and "vale", farewell to meat. Mardi Gras means Fat Tuesday, when milk and butter have to be finished prior to the austere diet of a traditional Lent. Exercises of self-denial, such as fasting, are easily misunderstood. They can seem an unhealthy attempt to expurgate a sense of guilt or

opposite of compulsive consumerism. To do with less frees one from the siren call of constant shopping. Prayer puts into practice the truth that in God alone is to be found the source of lasting satisfaction, and without God's blessing all will crumble to dust. Almsgiving or practical charity reminds us that all we have is given to us on trust by God for the common good, not just for ourselves.

Lent, like spring, is a time of new life. It is a clearing out of the dross, a refining of the spirit, a breaking of idols and false gods. Without it our lives become cluttered and confused. With a renewed sense of God, we find again a focus of judgment, of knowing the true from the false. Dilemmas remain in abundance, but our homing sense has been restored.

□ The Right Rev Vincent Nichols is the Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster

**Vincent Nichols**

even to appease a threatening deity. More probably they can be passed off as an attempt at healthier living. But which refined by Christian faith they are understood and experienced as an attempt to free one's inmost spirit to be more responsive to the things of God.

The observance of Lent is not a "do this or else" exercise. It is an invitation to enter more deeply into the reality of God's presence and the exquisite joy of knowing God more clearly.

Traditionally the practice of Lent calls for three kinds of effort: self-denial, prayer and practical charity towards those in need. Each aspect addresses our tendency to lose sight of God. Self-denial is the

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Artist returns to oils to capture light and colour

# Traditional skills flower at Hockney's new show

BY DALYA ALBERGE  
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE spectacular latest paintings by David Hockney, Britain's most celebrated living artist, will go on sale in May in his largest commercial show in London. Shown here in a special preview, the images of irises, sunflowers and violets, drenched in a radiant Californian light, are mesmerising colours that stay with the viewer long after they are seen.

In the new paintings, Hockney has forsaken faxes, photocopyers and other technology that has inspired experimentation, to return to the original tools of his trade: oils and canvas.

Hockney, who lives in California, spoke yesterday of the influence of a revelatory exhibition last year on Vermeer, the 17th-century Dutch master of light. "What struck me was how vivid and strong the colour was in paintings which are 300 years old. It was partly the way he'd painted them," he said.

"I came back here and realised we've got a marvelous abundance of wonderful, strong light. I began to arrange daylighting in different ways. The most important thing was the way colour was put on so as to stay there."

"I put on thin layers, so that it is transparent. Vermeer's technique was thin layers - thin layers of ultramarine, for



Hockney by Hockney: a charcoal sketch from 1983 shows the way he constantly explores new styles

example, to make it blue. It's because of the colour that it's lasted 300 years. I've painted flowers throughout my career, but I've never really done a whole series."

Such is Hockney's draw for collectors, the commands prices fetched by Old Masters. The latest pictures, to be exhibited at Annely Juda Fine Art in central London from May 1, range in price from £150,000 to £400,000.

David Juda, co-director of the gallery where the works will be shown, said: "These are the best paintings he's done in the past 15 years. They're so immediate. It's the

colour. If you look at the paintings, they look so incredibly thickly painted. But come up close and you can nearly see the canvas through the paint."

Hockney, born in 1937, began the series with sunflowers when his close friend, Jonathan Silver, a businessman and collector from Bradford, sent him 59 sunflowers for his 59th birthday. "I painted 30 of them. You don't get too long to paint them. They only lasted six days. That's what I took to paint them. After then, they bend and fall. I wanted to

paint pictures with a lot of yellow - the colour of hope, according to Van Gogh, and a rare colour in painting at the moment."

Hockney, who has criticised art schools that do not teach the basic crafts of painting and drawing, learnt the rules at Bradford College of Art and the Royal School of Art before breaking them.

He is best known for such images as *A Bigger Splash* (1967), the brilliant blue swimming pool painting depicting a splash just made by an unseen, submerged diver, his 1969 portrait of the fashion designer Ossie Clark in *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy* - both owned by the Tate Gallery - and the suite of charming etchings *Six Fairy Tales From the Brothers Grimm*, also from 1969.

Hockney's show, which opens on May 1, will include a series of portraits among the 48 paintings. He remains faithful to his sisters and they will reappear in the latest images; his 96-year-old mother is among them.

The artist will fly to London to direct the hanging; an exhibition's installation is of paramount importance to him. Inspired by his work in stage design, he has constructed a complete scale model of the Annely Juda gallery at his Los Angeles studio and had every picture reduced to postage-stamp size.



Hockney's latest oil on canvas works can command Old Master prices

## Robber is jailed for snatching Rolex

A ROBBER who wrested a Rolex watch from a couple whose Range Rover was held up in traffic yesterday, Judge Elton QC, said that Tariq Alayli carried out a "ruthless and terrifying" attack on victims whose only crime "was that by working hard at their chosen professions, they carried their riches of Rolex on their left wrists".

Alayli, 21, of Fulham, southwest London, admitted at Southwark Crown Court robbing Victor Monsey, 53, a company director, of his £16,000 Rolex and trying to rob his wife Elizabeth, 36, a cable television executive, of her £12,000 watch.

The couple, from Barnes, southwest London, fell prey last August to a gang armed with knives who had spent an afternoon driving around in a stolen car "seeking to prey on any victims who appeared to have valuable items".

Mr Monsey, who a few months earlier had a severe heart attack, and his wife were injured. Philip Shorrocks, for the prosecution, said the robbery ended when a passer-by intervened with a golfing umbrella. The judge awarded a £600 "thank-you" to three South African tourists who chased Alayli.

At the time of the incident Alayli was awaiting trial for robbing a woman at her home. He was sentenced yesterday to six years for that offence and four years consecutively for the Monsey crimes.

## Women hope to ring changes at St Paul's

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

PRESSURE is mounting for St Paul's to admit women to its bellringing guild following the appointment of the cathedral's first woman priest, the Rev Lucy Winkett.

Women can take the ropes as guest ringers at St Paul's, but it is the only one of England's 42 cathedrals to exclude women from its resident guild.

Leading the call for women bellringers is Paul Smith, a former president of the guild. He said yesterday that women in the bell tower were "treated as chattels" and that he had seen them "appallingly humiliated". Mr Smith resigned as a member of the guild in protest over other matters before Christmas.

Eminent women ringers have backed the call for change, which many consider to be overdue, especially in the light of Miss Winkett's appointment as a minor canon from September. St Paul's, whose 12 bells are among the most difficult to ring in the country and whose guild is respected nationally for its expertise, draws its ringers from the Ancient Society of College Youths, a strictly male body.

Baroness Cox, who rings at the 14th-century St Mary's at Monken Hadley, near Barnet, north London, said: "It seems to me that there is tension between long-established tra-



Winkett's appointment has encouraged ringers

ditions, and sometimes traditions can be precious, compared with an attempt to open up ringing in what has been a male preserve. Without undermining tradition, I think bellringing is a marvellous part of our English heritage and would like to see as many people as possible getting joy and satisfaction from it."

She said there was no reason why women could not ring as well as men. "Women have a lot to give and a lot to receive from what is a very precious part of our English heritage. I am not one to

eschew tradition and there may be good reasons for keeping St Paul's a male-only preserve. But, in general, I think we need to encourage ringing."

Jim Phillips, secretary of the cathedral guild, said: "We have six or seven ladies on whom we call regularly. If a competent lady turns up when there is a full complement of guild members, one of the guild will sit down and allow her to ring."

One insider said: "This is not something that has just blown up. Paul Smith resigned before Christmas but at the time he did not mention women as a reason for his resignation. He was unhappy about other things. There are often lady visitors to the tower at St Paul's."

The cathedral has been a bastion of Anglo-Catholic traditionalism in the Church of England, but the appointment of Miss Winkett indicates that under the stewardship of the new Dean, Dr John Moses, changes could be afoot.

Some churchmen and women would like to see girls and women singing in the choir at St Paul's, although there are no plans at present to introduce them. However, senior church figures, while reluctant to be quoted, are also quietly hoping for change on many fronts at the Church's flagship cathedral.

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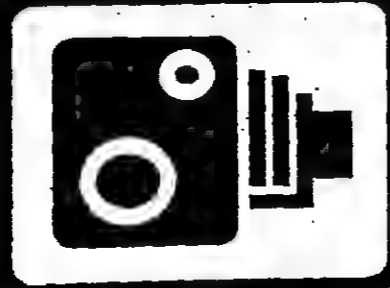
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# Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland follow Wilde and Beckett to Dublin

## Students pursue course of peace across the divide

By NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

BRIGHT young Protestants and Roman Catholics from Northern Ireland are forming new friendships in a rush to study in Dublin. After three decades of being shunned during the Troubles, Trinity College Dublin is resuming its traditional role as the Oxbridge of Ireland.

Students from communities in Northern Ireland have doubled to 600 in the past two years. More than half are Protestants, who steered clear of Dublin at the height of the conflict. Roman Catholic students were once relatively rare because, until 1970, they had to secure a special dispensation from the Church to attend the "dissident" Protestant Trinity founded by Queen Elizabeth I.

The increased popularity is seen as a direct result of the peace process. Rossa Coyle, 18, from Co Armagh, who was educated at a Catholic school, said she barely knew any Protestants until she started her English degree at Trinity last October. Within days of enrolling, she had struck up strong friendships and is now sharing a flat in Dublin with Caroline Jones, 19, a Protestant from Belfast.

Miss Coyle said: "Trinity really is a melting pot where everyone is so friendly. I know lots of Protestants from North-

ern Ireland, but I would never think of asking them their religion. When pictures of the north came on television, I tease Caroline about Orange marches, but it is not serious."

Miss Jones, who is in the first year of a degree in history, ancient history and archaeology, said that increasing numbers of Protestants ventured south as a direct result of the IRA ceasefire, but she had detected a slight chilling in the atmosphere since its collapse. She said: "It was so lovely during the peace. But I would say that I am made much more conscious of the fact that I am a Protestant. Some people from the south blame Protestants because they assume you are Unionist."

Catherine Donnelly, 23, a Catholic from Galway, Co Tyrone, a scholar in the final year of her law degree, said she came to Trinity because she wanted a different experience. She said: "Dublin is a lovely city and Trinity is such a nice college. There is so much to do."

Trinity once stood out as a symbol of Ireland's sectarian divisions. Known as the "University of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy", a third of its students were Protestants from Northern Ireland, another third came from Brit-

ain and the rest came from the Republic. When the Troubles erupted in 1969, the numbers from Northern Ireland fell to 5 per cent as Protestants avoided Dublin, which was regarded as Republican territory, and enrolled in British universities or stayed in Northern Ireland.

Trinity, which has 8,000 students, is delighted with the new influx. Dr Thomas Mitchell, the Provost, said: "It is very encouraging that students, and their parents in particular, think that it is once again appropriate that they should attend university in Dublin and that they are confident they will be welcome."

The increase means that public schools in Northern Ireland are resuming contacts with Dublin. The Portora Royal School in Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, which sent Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett to Trinity, is having little difficulty in encouraging its students to follow in their footsteps. Richard Bennett, Portora's principal, who studied at Trinity in the early 1960s, said: "I am very pleased. The renewed Irish dimension is important for northern students. I think it is also important for the university to be seen as an all-Ireland institution which it was set up to be."



Making new lives at "the Oxbridge of Ireland": from left, Rossa Coyle, her flatmate Caroline Jones, and Catherine Donnelly. Miss Coyle said: "Trinity really is a melting pot where everyone is so friendly"

## Why firms kick bad workers upstairs

By NIGEL HAWKES  
SCIENCE EDITOR

PROMOTION is a good way to get rid of a poor worker, psychologists said yesterday. A better-sounding job title means that the unwanted employee will look good to a rival firm on the job market.

Really talented people are more likely to stay for money than a title. The hidden benefits of taking incompetent staff and "kicking them upstairs" were highlighted in a US study which examined the employment records of more than 5,000 employees of an unnamed oil company.

Three researchers from Cornell University looked at what had happened to people hired between 1983 and 1988 and who were either still employed or had resigned voluntarily by the beginning of 1990. They were interested in the relationships between employee performance ratings, salary growth, promotions, and other factors, and how these influenced decisions to stay or leave.

Charlie Trevor, Dr Barry Gerhart, and Dr John Boudreau report in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* that promotion is one way of getting rid of poorer performers, because it gives them visibility and legitimacy in the job market. Promotion had no effect on the turnover of the best-performing employees.

These people already enjoyed high marketability, so promotions alone — unless allied to extra salary — did little to discourage them from taking up attractive offers from other employers.

High salary growth helped most to retain the high performers. Because they find it easier to move, their turnover is more highly dependent on being satisfied to stay where they are, which depends on salary growth.

Merit pay systems that fail to recognise the difference between the best and worst performers are likely to contribute to high-performer turnover, they note. "Tomorrow's stars may be among today's few top performers, their retention, at least in part, appears to depend on paying them according to their performance."

## Robber paralysed in supermarket raid given £150,000 home

By IAN MURRAY  
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

AN ARMED robber, paralysed from the neck down after being shot by rival criminals during a supermarket raid, is to be rehoused in a purpose-built £150,000 flat and given round-the-clock care at a cost of £2,500 a week.

Gary Mullins, 28, has been a patient at Stoke Mandeville Hospital since April 1994, when he and an accomplice were gunned down by an Ulster loyalist gang who were attempting to rob the same store.

Considered too ill to stand trial for the raid in which he was injured, he will need 24-hour care in the four-bedroom flat provided by a housing association in Islington, north London.

He had a string of convictions for violent crime, and had spent much of his adult life in prison. While in hospital, he was infamous for abusing staff and other patients.

Colin Meek, 26, his accomplice, was shot in the head by the loyalist gang but has made a 90 per cent recovery. Last June he was jailed for ten years for his part in the raid in

Islington, during which the two men threatened staff with a sawn-off shotgun and sprayed them with CS gas before stealing nearly £7,000 from the tills.

The loyalist gang, who had been staking out the same store, shot them as they tried to make their getaway in a stolen car. Three members of the loyalist gang have since received 20-year sentences for attempted murder.

The Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute Mullins for the robbery, in which he was hit by a bullet which severed his spinal

cord. His condition has been stabilised and he has moved from the Buckinghamshire hospital to a north London nursing home while his new flat is equipped to suit his needs. Among the necessary equipment is a small generator to provide back-up for the ventilator which helps him to breathe.

Islington council is responsible for housing Mullins because he was born and brought up in the borough. He is considered a priority case so he has jumped to the top of the list. His flat is on a small housing association estate, half a

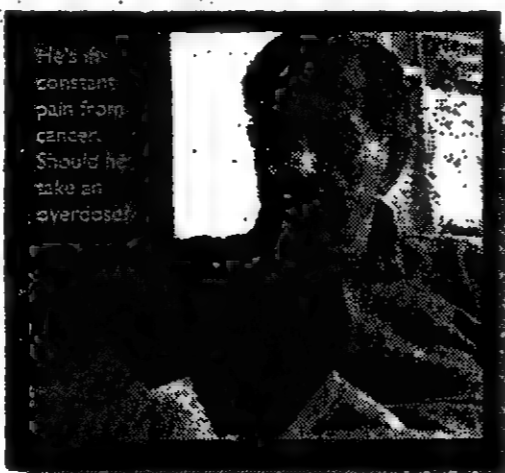
mile from the scene of the robbery.

"We cannot discuss individual cases but have a statutory duty to look after people according to their health needs under the Community Care Act, the Housing Act and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Act," the council said. "The circumstances in which someone has become paralysed have nothing to do with our legal responsibility."

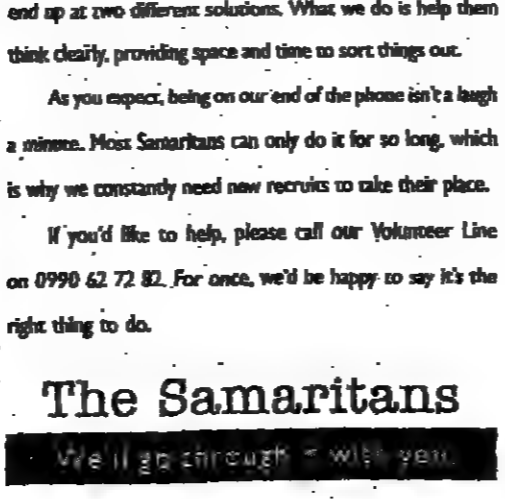
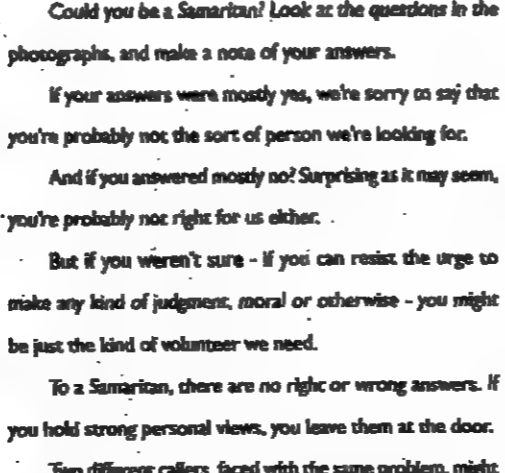
Although the council is required to find accommodation, it will not have to pay for it. Rent for the flat will be covered by housing benefit and most of the nursing package

will be funded by Camden and Islington Health Authority.

Sarah Ludford, leader of the Liberal Democrat group on Islington council, said it was shocking that an armed criminal could get to the top of the housing list ahead of law-abiding citizens. "This man has spent his life preying on a community that is now going to have to pay to look after him," Ms Ludford said. "Everyone has the right to community care, but I would like to be assured that there are not more deserving cases ahead of him in the queue."



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مركزاً من لاصح

# Belgrade Mayor ends 50 years of socialist power

FROM TOM WALKER IN BELGRADE

ZORAN DJINDJIC was yesterday elected Mayor of Belgrade, ending fifty years of Socialist rule in the Serb capital.

Preparations for a street party began in earnest after the vote, and hundreds of thousands were expected last night in the city centre to celebrate a milestone in the Zaidno coalition's crusade to rid Serbia of President Milosevic's moribund regime. They were lent heart by growing signs that Serbia's federal Yugoslav partner, Montenegro, is growing tired of Mr Milosevic's deadweight. Mile Djukanovic, the Montenegrin Prime Minister, said it would be "totally wrong" for him to stay in power, raising doubts as to whether Mr Milosevic can garner the Montenegrin support he will need to become the next Yugoslav federal President.

Yesterday's vote, a formality, was nonetheless a warning to Zaidno of the difficulties of keeping friends in the fractious bangleground of Balkan politics. A withering and personal attack by Vojislav Seselj, the ultra-nationalist former Serb paramilitary leader, left Mr Djindjic red-faced and the session in procedural chaos. "Once a thief always a thief," screamed Mr Seselj, dredging up an old allegation

that Mr Djindjic had once stolen a leather jacket and a more recent rumour that he had paid two representatives to switch parties. "Who knows what he will steal next?" Mr Seselj, whose friends include Jean-Marie Le Pen, the French National Front leader, has mined a rich vein of political capital from the foreign support given to Zaidno during its 88 days of protest. He made full use of the foreign media yesterday, giving a theatrical performance. "No one has marched behind a German flag in Belgrade since 1944," he said. "You're not electing a Belgrade Mayor, you're electing a *Sturmführer*."

Ignoring the attacks, the new Mayor of Belgrade thanked the people for their

unwavering support since November, when Mr Milosevic overturned Zaidno's election victories. "I see the great will of the people," he said. "Finally Belgrade will become a world metropolis."

He recognised the most obvious problem for Zaidno councils — the bankrupt town halls they have inherited, and the likelihood that Mr Milosevic will attempt to starve them of state cash — but pledged: "Belgrade must become a mirror of Serbia."

Although he acknowledged his Serb Radical Party could not affect yesterday's outcome, Mr Seselj gave warning of trouble, predicting the break-up of the Zaidno coalition. "Djindjic will ruin you," he shouted at Vuk Draskovic, Mr Djindjic's Zaidno partner.

One of the first actions taken by the council yesterday was to order an audit of its Socialist predecessor's books. It also announced a new board of directors, comprising cross-party politicians and journalists, for Studio B, the capital's television station. Another blow to the Milosevic family was Thursday's assassination of a business associate of the President's son, Marko. Vuk Draskovic, who owned the "Tret" group of companies, was shot in New Belgrade's Sava business centre.

## Berisha travels to raise support

Tirana: President Berisha of Albania disavowed demands for his resignation over the crash of pyramid investment funds and headed to the north of the country in his campaign to win back public support. On Thursday protesters in the capital threw stones at police who fired live rounds over their heads. (Reuters)



The four murdered young women, who were identified only by their first names, clockwise from top left: Audrey, 17, Isabelle, 20, Peggy, 20, and Amelie, 17



A woman and her daughter weeping at the site near Boulogne where the bodies were found yesterday

## Bodies of Boulogne murder victims found

FROM REUTERS IN LILLE

FRENCH police yesterday found the bodies of four young women who went missing during a carnival evening ten days ago in the northern port of Boulogne.

Investigators said suspects had confessed to the murder of the women, whose bodies were found concealed at the base of a concrete blockhouse built by German forces during the Second World War in a forest outside the village of Portel, near Boulogne.

The four young women — named only as 20 year-olds

Isabelle and Peggy, and 17-year-olds Audrey and Amelie — were wearing carnival dresses when they went missing. They were allegedly murdered on the evening following their disappearance, and their bodies were found at Sainte-Cecile-Plage.

Five members of one family were detained by police. The suspects included three brothers, all of them scrap merchants, who live in a village a few miles from the spot where the women were seen for the last time, police said.

## Euro-tax 'fudge' helps Italy towards EMU

FROM CHARLES BRENNEN IN BRUSSELS

ITALY was given a helping hand in its uphill struggle to qualify for monetary union yesterday when the European Commission ruled that it was entitled to use a once-off "Euro-tax" to narrow its budget deficit.

Eurostat, the Commission's statistical arm, rejected critics' claims that Rome's special tax amounted to a "fudge" to help it scrape below the budget limit for 1997, set by the Maastricht treaty as a key condition for membership of the future single currency.

The decision was applauded by Professor Romano Prodi, the Italian

Prime Minister, who has staked his job on swapping the lira for the euro when the currency is launched on January 1, 1999. It was greeted with a stony silence in Bonn, where the Finance Ministry would make no comment.

Italy's burning ambition to join economic and monetary union (EMU) at the outset is upsetting German politicians who fear that the consequences of letting the traditionally weak currencies of southern Europe embrace the euro.

Theo Waigel, the German Finance Minister, has warned candidate members against "creative bookkeeping", a charge that has been indignantly denied by Signor Prodi. German warnings have come to sound less

authoritative this month with signs that Bonn, faced with crushing unemployment, will itself be hard-pressed to match the Maastricht criteria.

While Germany's new travails have prompted speculation on a possible delay in EMU, they have fed hopes in Italy, Spain and Portugal, that European leaders could ease the rules for the sake of keeping to the timetable.

The future euro countries will be chosen by the 15 heads of government at a summit in Britain in little over a year's time. They must also take into account national debt and performance in inflation and interest and exchange rates but the budget deficit is deemed to be the cardinal test.

Eurostat has approved a series of

other controversial budget manoeuvres, including a switch of state pension funds that is helping to narrow the French deficit this year. Yesterday it said the Italian tax, to be levied this year, qualified as a legitimate fiscal revenue because it would not be repaid. It also gave the nod to other Italian measures involving railway investment.

In an emotional speech in Rome yesterday, Signor Prodi issued a sharp rebuke to Germany for its reluctance to accept Italian membership of EMU. "Europe is not just about a currency, it is impossible to think of Europe cut off from its great Latin culture," Signor Prodi said. "German culture cannot represent by itself all of Europe."

## Mobutu returns to France

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

PRESIDENT MOBUTU of Zaire flew back to his holiday villa in the south of France yesterday as South Africa sought to bring together Zairean rebels and government officials for tentative peace talks to end the conflict in eastern Zaire.

Mr Mobutu had an operation for prostate cancer in Switzerland last August. After recuperating in Switzerland and France as Zaire slipped closer to anarchy, he finally returned home in December.

Last month he came back to France for new medical tests and spent a further three weeks in his mansion overlooking the Mediterranean.

During his earlier convalescent periods in the south of France, Mr Mobutu held meetings with various African and French leaders as well as with United Nations officials, but presidential aides did not say whether he was planning any other official contacts during his current stay.

Switzerland has said that Mr Mobutu will not be granted a visa to return there for further cancer treatment, but

France has welcomed the Zairean leader in the belief that he still has enough authority to bring order to the chaos in his country.

In Cape Town, Ngbanda Nzambo Ko Ayumba, the Zairean envoy, who is Mr Mobutu's nephew and security adviser, said that Thabo Mbeki, the South African Deputy President, was talking to both sides in the conflict. "South Africa is trying to bring points of view together and pass one side's point of view on to the other," he said in an interview broadcast here by French radio.

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CHANGING TIMES

# 'Weizman will ask Queen to make state visit to Israel

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM AND ALAN HAMILTON

THE Queen will be formally invited to pay her first visit to the Holy Land next week during a three-day state visit to Britain by President Weizman, the first by an Israeli head of state since the country's foundation 49 years ago. A senior Israeli official said members of the Jewish community in Britain hoped that the visit might be timed to coincide with next year's celebrations to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Jewish State.

Buckingham Palace said last night that no invitation for the Queen to visit Israel had yet been received, but that if Mr Weizman did invite her to become the first British head of state to make a formal visit to Israel, she would rely on government advice on whether to accept.

Palace sources said that in the past the Queen had received invitations to visit China and Russia, but in both cases she had waited for several years until the political climate in the host country was judged to be suitable.

## Spitting fine upheld

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

SPITTING at the sight of the Cross has led to a conviction in an Israeli court. The judge received little publicity when it was originally handed down. But on appeal this week, it resulted in the upholding of a two-month suspended prison sentence and a 750 shekel (£150) fine for spitting imposed on a Jew who saw a Cross near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built on the spot where many Christians believe Christ was crucified.

The Jerusalem District Court heard that the incident took place on March 11, 1995, as a procession of Cross-bearing Armenian priests marched from the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City towards the Holy Sepulchre. Moshe Arenfeld was accused of spitting on the ground when the procession passed him. He denied the act. In the original verdict, Judge Yoel Tsaban ruled that spitting in such a context represented a disturbance of religious observance. He argued that "disturbance does not have to be an act that physically prevents the observance of a ritual".

The judge convicted Arenfeld of religious disturbance. The convicted man appealed, contending that the law grants a man the freedom to spit "even when a Cross is going by".

The appeal stated: "It is impossible to ignore the fact that there is a Jewish custom of considering it a *mitzvah* [a good or charitable deed] to spit" under such circumstances. The appeal court rejected the contention, arguing that freedom of expression has its limits.



Weizman: served with RAF during the war

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Israeli officials are confident that previous Foreign Office objections to such a sensitive trip would be overcome. "The UK Jewish community feels a royal visit is long overdue," said the Israeli magazine *Jerusalem Report*.

The strongest hint that the Queen will accept Mr Weizman's invitation — which one diplomat described as a "minefield for protocol" — was given in 1995 by John Major, who became only the second serving Prime Minister to visit the Jewish state.

Asked if he would recommend that the Queen take up any future invitation from the Israeli Government, the Prime Minister said: "Prime Philip paid a very successful visit here [in 1994] and I cannot anticipate decisions Buckingham Palace will take. But I have no doubt that in due course, the Queen will visit."

The Duke of Edinburgh's brief but historic visit to Jerusalem and the Holocaust memorial at Yad Vashem was classified as "private". In 1995, the Prince of Wales made a similarly "private" visit to the funeral of Yitzhak Rabin, the assassinated Prime Minister.

While in London, Mr Weizman, a charismatic former fighter pilot who served with the RAF in Egypt and India during the Second World War, will be guest of honour at a state banquet at Buckingham Palace. He will host a return banquet at Spencer House.

At Jerusalem, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, was warned by police he could face judicial proceedings in connection with a scandal over a key government appointment, public television said. Three police officers who questioned Mr Netanyahu told him that his statement may be used to bring charges against him, the station said. Earlier, police said that they had enough evidence to bring charges against at least one senior official in the Government, perhaps within the next few days. (AP)



Millions of biscuits end up on the tip yesterday after an extortion threat was received

## Biscuit maker dumps stock

Sydney: Australia's biggest biscuit-maker, Arnotts, began dumping millions of packets of biscuits yesterday after an extortion threat that forced it to withdraw its stock from supermarkets.

Arnotts said it believed that none of the packets, removed from shop shelves in Queensland and New South Wales, were contaminated but it wanted to be "ultra-safe".

Much of the stock disposed of at a Sydney dump had also been damaged when it was cleared last Friday after news of the threat to plant poisoned biscuits in shops was disclosed, the company said.

This week, the police called on the extortionist to contact them by next Monday or they would consider the threat ended. The extortionist

threatened to poison the biscuits unless police involved in a 1991 murder case took a lie detector test, adding that police lied in giving evidence that resulted in Ron Thomas serving two life sentences for a double shooting murder he did not commit.

Thomas, who says he is innocent, has called on the extortionist to stop his attempt to free him. (Reuters)

## Texan militia at war with US

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

HIGH in the Davis mountains in western Texas, a militia group is claiming that Texas is a sovereign nation at war with the United States.

Residents fear its increasing campaign of harassment may provoke another Waco, where members of the Branch Davidian cult were killed in a fire at their besieged compound.

Yesterday, Richard McLaren, 43, who calls himself "Ambassador at Large of the Republic of Texas", was due to appear in court for pretrial hearings on charges of burglary, contempt of court and refusal to stop racketeering. He has said he will defy the court orders.

The group's decade-long campaign of "paper terrorism", which aims to choke the Texas courts and banking system with a flood of bogus property claims and bad checks, has become a focus for Texas's thriving separatist movement. However, federal officials have held back from a showdown with Mr McLaren's group, fearing a repetition of the botched intervention at Waco, eastern Texas, four years ago.

The Waco deaths have since become for Texan militia groups a symbol of the evils of government. Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma bombing suspect, cited Waco as a reason for his actions and the opening of his trial on March 31 in Colorado is expected to stir separatist sentiment.

From his in-shed "embassy" Mr McLaren threatens that if there is an attempt to cut off his headquarters, "there will be a military reprisal". He claims that 2,000 men — the "Texas Defence Force" — are ready to defend the "embassy".

His group has "ordered" George Bush Jr, state Governor, and all state legislators to vacate the capital building in Austin. More seriously, its "paper war" is costing homeowners and businesses hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees and bad debts. By filing bogus property claims in court, the group has prevented homeowners from selling and forced them to fight court battles to clear their titles.

## Elizabeth Taylor recovers

Los Angeles: Elizabeth Taylor was said to be comfortable and recuperating well yesterday after a four-hour operation to remove a tumour from her brain (Giles Whitell writes).

The two-inch growth appeared to be benign but will be analysed in a biopsy to confirm there is no danger of its spreading. Dr Martin Cooper said after the surgery.

## Sobhraj set free

Delhi: Charles Sobhraj, the notorious thief and murderer, was freed when the prosecution withdrew charges relating to a 1986 jailbreak. He will be deported to his native France. (Reuters)

## Marine failure

Washington: Riddick Bowe, the former heavyweight champion of the world, was granted permission to leave the US Marine Corps Reserves, on the third day of his training in South Carolina.

## Two Sunnis held

Multan: Pakistani police said they had arrested two Sunni Muslim militants suspected of attacking an Iranian cultural centre here on Thursday in which eight people were killed. (Reuters)

## Criminal ranks

Lagos: The majority of police officers here are crooks, Abubakar Tsav, the state's police chief told the government-owned *Daily Times*. "They are robbers in police uniform," he said. (AP)

## Hostages hope

Lima: Talks to free 72 hostages, held for more than two months, took a step forward when the leader of the hostage-takers left his compound for negotiations on neutral ground for the first time. (AP)

## 'Unnatural' sex

Oral sex has been declared illegal in Singapore unless it is practised as a prelude to full sex, the island's Court of Appeal ruled. The court said the practice was "against the order of nature".

## First B52 woman pilot faces sex charge

Los Angeles: In a blow for women seeking greater opportunities in the US Armed Forces, the first female air force pilot qualified to fly America's biggest bombers in combat is to be court-martialled on charges of adultery and "fraternisation" (Giles Whitell writes).

First Lieutenant Kelly Flinn, who flies B52 long-range bombers stationed in Minot, North Dakota, faces a possible

dishonourable discharge if found guilty of having an "inappropriate relationship" with someone of a lower rank, an Air Force spokesman said. In the meantime she remains on active duty.

After graduating from the Air Force Academy in 1993, Lieutenant Flinn, whose age has been withheld, was certified to fly the B52 in combat two years ago. "In the Air Force, my career has

pretty much been in a male-dominated field, so being part of a largely male crew is nothing new. We're one team trying to complete a mission and put bombs on target," she said on her appointment.

First flown in the 1950s, the B52s have been frequently refitted to drop conventional bombs on Vietnam and Iraq. Based in Louisiana as well as Minot, they have also been used to launch cruise missiles.

## North Korea ousts Prime Minister in defection 'purge'

BY ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

KANG SONG SAN, the North Korean Prime Minister, has been relieved of his post, fuelling speculation that he is the victim of a purge related to the defection of a close adviser to President Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader.

Radio Pyongyang last night reported that Hong Song Nam, 73, the Deputy Prime Minister, has been appointed acting Prime Minister, but gave no reason for the change. In Seoul, a senior official of South Korea's National Unification Board suggested that health problems might explain why Mr Kang, 66, has been replaced. He has not been seen in public since January last year, due to illness, the official said.

The timing of the move has prompted some North Korea watchers to speculate that the defection this month of Hwang Jang Yop, a high-ranking official, has unleashed a purge within the power structure. Mr Kang is believed to have shared Mr Hwang's view that North Korea could overcome its economic problems and famine only by adopting an open-door policy and reforms similar to those of China.

The two men were therefore vulnerable to attack from hard-liners close to Mr Kim, who argued that the radical reforms they favoured would bring down the regime, according to a senior Japanese government source.

Developments in the Stalinist state are shrouded in mystery, but a power struggle

appears to be under way in the run-up to Mr Kim's formal accession to power, expected later this year. The government source predicts a further shake-out of senior figures in the ruling structure close to Mr Hwang, whose defection came as a shock to the regime.

North Korea has reversed its position and said it will attend preliminary talks in New York to discuss permanent peace on the Korean peninsula. Pyongyang had been threatening to scuttle the proposed talks, involving the United States and China as well as the two Koreas, unless it received badly needed American grain.

Its announced agreement comes after South Korea and the United States promised millions of dollars in food aid but it remains uncertain whether the preliminary negotiations will lead to full peace talks. However, the North's decision is likely to lead to an easing of tensions between North and South Korea, which are still technically at war after their bloody three-year conflict in the 1950s.

A spokesman for North Korea's Foreign Ministry told North Korea's state-run news agency that his country and the United States held talks recently and agreed to go ahead with the briefing, set for March 5, according to the North Koreans.

On Thursday, South Korea said it would donate \$6 million (£3.7 million) in emergency food aid to North Korea. Washington has said it will donate \$10 million more.

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# Seven rivals 'pose risk to Jiang's hold on power'

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Jiang Zemin of China has failed to consolidate his grip on power and faces at least seven rivals for influence within the Communist Party, according to a leaked CIA report yesterday.

His shaky control could keep Mr Jiang focused on domestic rather than on global issues, the report said. An American government official familiar with the report said that although Mr Jiang had shown "remarkable staying power", the real test of his leadership skills, in the wake of Deng Xiaoping's death, would come at the 15th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in October.

Without Mr Deng, Mr Jiang faces the curse of Chinese succession. Although he was chosen by the late paramount leader, history is against him. Chairman Mao's handpicked heir, Hua Guofeng, lasted only two years. Even Mr Deng once admitted that for a leader to pick his successor was a "feudal practice".

The secret CIA report, prepared last June, portrayed Mr Jiang's rivals as trying to limit his power before the party congress, even though he is head of state, general secretary of the Communist Party and commander-in-chief. The assessment, by a CIA section

that tracks foreign leadership developments, was leaked to *The Washington Times*.

This right-wing newspaper is frequently used as a conduit by the intelligence agency for opinions that it wants to publicise without admitting its authorship. A CIA spokesman said she could not comment on the report.

Whatever the CIA's motives, the leak could be construed as a warning, before Mr Jiang's meeting with President Clinton this year, that China needs international support and should not provoke the United States over the touchy issues of human rights and the handover of Hong Kong.

The report said that Mr Jiang was expected to pursue "less controversial activities" in an effort to build his own stature as well as China's. In fact, there has already been an appreciable warming of Sino-American relations since the CIA report was written and Mr Clinton was re-elected.

The report identified a key rival to Mr Jiang as Qiao Shi, chairman of the National People's Congress, who oversees national security, the police and courts. It said he was openly critical of Mr Jiang's policies towards Taiwan, had contradicted him in front of regional Chinese officials and could emerge as "kingmaker for another challenger".

Other rivals included Li Peng, the Prime Minister, "working to undercut Mr Jiang's authority behind the scenes"; Zhu Rongji, the Deputy Prime Minister who disagreed with Mr Jiang over economic policy; and Li Ruihuan, a politburo member linked with Mr Jiang's critics.

Further potential challengers were said to be Tian Juyun, a political ally of Mr Qiao; Yang Shangkun, 89, a former President who criticised some of Mr Jiang's decisions; and Wan Li, the former chairman of the National People's Congress who is said to be opposed to Mr Jiang over policy on Taiwan.

## Deng's death mourned strictly to order

BY JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

AS CHINA entered its first full day of state mourning for Deng Xiaoping yesterday, thousands of official commemorative meetings were held throughout the country by local Communist Party committees, government offices and state-run organisations.

In Beijing's Tiananmen Square, police detained a man as he carried a wreath apparently dedicated to Mr Deng. He was bundled into a car along with the wreath, on which the words "Deng Xiaoping" were written on a ribbon, a witness said.

At Mr Deng's birthplace, thousands of weeping mourners fell to their knees. Armed police were summoned to keep order among the unruly in Pafang village in the remote southwestern province of Sichuan where pilgrims with tear-streaked faces prostrated themselves on the ground. "There are a lot of people crying, some of them young, but most of them are older," said an official at Mr Deng's former home, now a museum.

In Chengdu, Sichuan's provincial capital, with its 120 million population, up to 30,000 people gathered on Thursday night to mark the death of their native son, carrying wreaths in white mourning flowers which were placed in large piles. Hun-



Chinese troops, members of a guard of honour for official ceremonies, lay down arms during a drill at their barracks in Beijing yesterday

dreds of students marched through Chengdu's streets carrying tributes to the departed leader, who spoke with a thick Sichuanese accent, and banners bearing the signatures of thousands of mourners.

Witnesses said police had to intervene several times to restore order. The Government dislikes such spontaneous displays that are outside its control.

As portrayed on state television here, there was nothing

spontaneous about any of the official meetings. Their object was to pay tribute to Mr Deng and his policies and to emphasise the need for China's 1.2 billion population to unite around the leadership of Mr Deng's chosen successor, Jiang Zemin, 70, the party chief, a lacklustre and possibly stopgap figure who is nevertheless constantly referred to as the "core" of the new leadership.

Diplomats see these meetings, which all take the same

form and are clearly minutely choreographed from Beijing, as an effort to ensure that the party and state apparatus — and people at large — stay in line, and thus reduce the danger of trouble that any spontaneous, genuine mourning might produce.

"They are terrified of people's human feelings and fear that any outpouring of grief turns dangerous," one envoy said.

Under black banners read-

ing "Comrade Deng will live in our hearts forever", officials paid tribute to Mr Deng's "achievements" and affirmed their determination to carry out the transformation of China he set in motion, a transformation restricted to the economic sphere which did not permit any liberalisation in politics.

No venues have been set aside for people to pay their last respects to Mr Deng. State media reported last night that this was in deference to his wish for a simple

funeral, though it is believed it was to avoid possible trouble. In 1976, when Zhou Enlai, the revered Prime Minister, died, and in 1989, with the death of Hu Yaobang, the deposed party chief, hundreds of demonstrators in Tiananmen Square hurled mourning for dead leaders into protests against living ones, and both times troops had to move in to clear the square with loss of life. Tributes, even floral ones, are anathema at Tiananmen.

## Hong Kong leader threatens street protests

BY MICHAEL BINYON DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE leader of Hong Kong's Democrats, Martin Lee QC, threatened civil disobedience yesterday, including illegal street protests, if China insists on introducing draconian laws to curb Hong Kong's Bill of Rights when it takes over the territory.

"This must be one of the ways for Hong Kong people to express their views," he said. "If the police give us a permit, then we will do it. If they do not, we will do it anyway." His party would refuse to pay any fines they incurred, Mr Lee added that he did not

think he would be arrested because he was too well known abroad. He said, however, that he feared his party colleagues would be.

Speaking in London at the end of a tour of European capitals, Mr Lee said he would challenge the new laws in the courts. If they lost, as he was sure they would once a new law on subversion allowed the authorities to declare illegal anything they disliked, he would continue his opposition to any measures introduced to curb democracy in Hong Kong.

He said he would not emigrate before the handover to China in July. "I feel that the Hong Kong people need a

voice. My party is popular because it is the voice of Hong Kong." He said that the moment he left, he would become irrelevant.

The Democrats hold the largest number of seats in the colony's Legislative Council, but none has been selected for the provisional council appointed by Beijing.

Mr Lee welcomed the announcement by Tung Chee-hwa, the chief executive appointed by China to take over in July, that all civil servants would be asked to stay in their jobs. That was an important signal to the colony, "I am giving him the benefit of the doubt," he said. "If he only says

things to please the Chinese leaders but then quietly does things for Hong Kong, that is the best we can hope for. But there are certain things where you cannot please both sides."

He criticised Chris Patten, the Governor, for not setting up an independent human rights commission years ago. There was still time for Mr Patten to introduce important reforms, he added — in particular, setting up an independent body to administer legal aid, now controlled by a government department. "Do you think after the handover that anyone will be able to call for legal aid for constitutional challenges?"



Jiang: Beijing congress will be the test



Lee: Democrats will refuse to pay fines

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# Albright fails to convince Kremlin on Nato expansion

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

DESPITE American attempts to reassure Moscow that Nato is no longer a threat, Russia remained opposed to the alliance's expansion eastwards at the end of yesterday's talks with Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State.

"We are still negatively disposed," Yevgeni Primakov, the Foreign Minister, said, although Ms Albright said that they had made progress on a charter to link Russia to the alliance. Mr Primakov said that it must be binding on both sides and Ms Albright told reporters that question could be worked out.

"The issues are complex and will require a lot of work," Ms Albright added. "We have established a work plan to get as much of this accomplished as quickly as possible. It is on a fast track."

Sergei Yastrzhembsky, the presidential press secretary, said there were grounds for optimism after the talks, although "it is premature to talk about a breakthrough" ... "I would rather say one can express cautious optimism."

Both sides said the atmosphere of the talks had been good. Mr Primakov, speaking at a joint press conference with Ms Albright, who is regarded in Moscow as much more of a hardliner than her predecessor, Warren Christopher, described the Secretary of State as "not just an iron lady,

but also a very constructive lady". Despite the "negative" disposition towards expansion, "we are doing everything we can conceivably think of in order to minimise any negative consequences that might arise in the event that Nato does expand," he said.

Television pictures showed Mr Yeltsin clasping Ms Albright's hand warmly as he greeted her in the Kremlin. In an aside to aides at the conference table, he gave a mock warning: "She understands Russian, so we have to be careful what we say."

Ms Albright brought various measures with her to Moscow aimed at softening Russia's stance against the admission of former Warsaw Pact members to Nato, including adjustments to the arms ceilings agreed in the 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe treaty, which Russia has long argued fails to take into account the post-Cold War situation, as well as the charter defining relations between Nato and Russia.

She also proposed the setting up of a joint Nato-Russian brigade, to be used chiefly for peacekeeping. Russian officials have made clear that they are unimpressed by that proposal, a point repeated by Mr Yastrzhembsky yesterday: "In the alphabet of our interests it is somewhere close to the first letter of my name," he said.

However, the main thrust of Ms Albright's talks was to try to convince the Russians that Nato enlargement was aimed at enhancing European security within a system that involved partnership and co-operation with Moscow rather than aggression and hostility.

A cardinal element of the new situation is that it will no longer be a situation of you versus us," she said. "We are on the same side. Nato and Russia have a mutual interest in preventing instability and threats to security in the coming century."

The Russian side is still holding out for a legally binding agreement, which would give Moscow some say on future developments as well as setting out limits to the deployment of forces and arms in any new countries to join the alliance.

Nato rejects the notion of a legally binding document, although it has given Moscow assurances that no nuclear weapons will be deployed on the territory of new member states.

The Russian leadership, wary of criticism from nationalists at home, is certainly in no hurry to reach agreement and eager to wrest as many concessions as possible from the alliance before signing any accord.

Magazine, page 8



President Yeltsin welcomes Madeleine Albright to the Kremlin yesterday. Later, during their negotiations, he remarked in a mock warning to his aides: "She understands Russian, so we have to be careful what we say"

## Poles fear alliance 'carve-up'

FROM REUTERS IN BRUSSELS

THE Polish Prime Minister, Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz, visiting Nato headquarters in Brussels to promote Warsaw's membership plans, warned the big Western powers yesterday not to make a deal with Russia without referring to other countries.

Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, said earlier yesterday that she had made important progress on a deal with Russia which is designed to overcome Moscow's hostility to Nato enlargement.

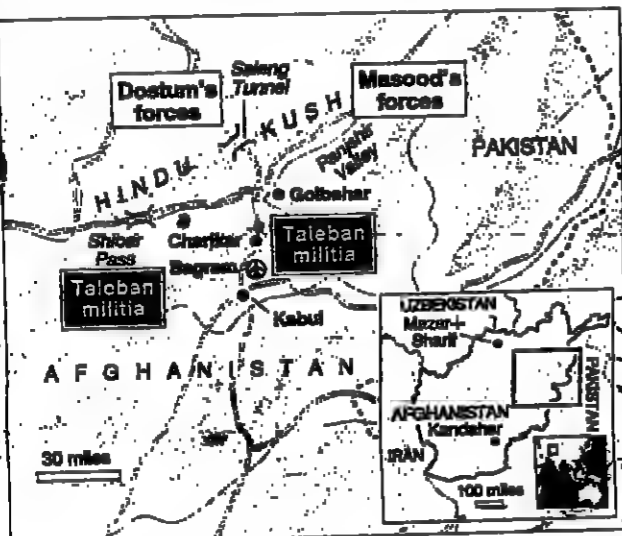
However, Mr Cimoszewicz echoed fears in Eastern Europe and among some Nato allies that the United States and other influential countries might ignore their concerns and push on with a "great power carve-up". Any deal with Moscow, he told the alliance, should be "transparent" and should take into account the concerns of non-members. Poland would not accept any deal that would make it a "second-class" member when it joins.

"In a system of co-operative security, there is no place for geopolitics, spheres of influence, secret protocols or concerts of great powers," the Prime Minister told ambassadors from the 16 Nato nations. "We trust that our Nato partners share this view. We hope so does Russia."

At a Madrid summit in July, Nato will invite some Eastern European countries, which are widely expected to include Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, to join the alliance.

## Market panic as Taliban soldiers buy out their enemies

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN MAZARI SHARIF, NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN



KEFAYAT Market, heart of the money machine of northern Afghanistan, sums up the mood of this vast, strategically vital region: fearful, suspicious, and wondering when everything will collapse in another calamity for this devastated country.

Eighteen years of war have smashed and finally pacified most of the south, east and west of Afghanistan; now it is the turn of the north to feel the terror of invasion, which may come next week, in three months or, improbably, not at all.

The men who deal in sackloads of cash amid the four storeys of screaming chaos that make up Kefayat Market are in panic, their exchange rates doubling and halving against the dollar as news of war ebbs and flows.

The Taliban Islamic army, flush with foreign money and with two-thirds of the country under its control, much of it unhappily, is pressing north towards the final prize: the oil and gas-rich provinces controlled by General Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek warlord of the north.

The hunger for news in Mazar-i Sharif, the principal northern city, is

greatest in Kefayat Market, where moneychangers scream over their satellite telephones to Moscow, Tashkent, Peshawar, Kabul and Karachi, changing their exchange rates by the hour.

There are two currencies in Afghanistan, both called the *afghani*, neither worth more than the paper they are printed on. It is symbolic of the state of Afghanistan that its currencies, hauled around like sacks of vegetables, are backed by nothing.

General Dostum prints his own notes by the truckload, probably in Russia, and Taliban has commandeered money from the Government it ousted from Kabul. They circulate

together, albeit at different rates. Taliban's remarkable advance through Afghanistan was halted north of Kabul in October by the forces of General Dostum and his ally, Ahmed Shah Masood, the Tajik warlord fighting for survival in his stronghold in the Panjshir Valley.

Taliban has gained territory, capturing important towns and taking its forces to the last valley, Shibar Pass, leading to the northern plains and an open run to Mazar-i Sharif.

Taliban's secret of success is not to fight, but to pay. It bought its way through Afghanistan, paying enemy commanders to step aside and their troops to join up. General Muham-

mad Yusuf, head of the political section of General Dostum's movement, denied in Mazar that Dostum commanders had been bought off.

He also denied that Dostum commanders had been converting their assets into dollars in readiness to move to the safety of the Central Asian republics should Taliban capture Mazar. Neither denial is convincing: the rumours in the money market, the stories told by prominent citizens, all point to the collapse of morale. The currency has soared in value day by day for the past month, so that it takes only a shopping bag, not a lorry, to carry away the equivalent of \$100 (£60).



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# Key suspects in Clinton fund scandal invoke right to silence

FROM TOM RHODES AND BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

TWO key suspects in President Clinton's fundraising scandal retreated to the shelter of the American Constitution yesterday, invoking the Fifth Amendment to remain silent.

John Huang, the former Commerce Department official at the centre of the investigations, and Webster Hubbell, the former associate Attorney-General, refused to submit subpoenaed documents to Congress and invoked their privilege against self-incrimination.

However, in a letter to the House government and oversight committee, Mr Huang's lawyer agreed to turn over some documents and signalled that his client, a top Democratic fundraiser before Mr Clinton's re-election last year, may be prepared to co-operate if granted immunity from prosecution.

Their refusal fuels the controversy surrounding Mr Clinton's fundraising practices, the target of multiple investigations which are becoming the scourge of his second term. The White House faces a protracted and embarrassing hearing even though the nemesis of Mr Clinton's first four years ap-

peared to be fading. Kenneth Starr, the Independent Whitewater counsel, announced this week he would leave for an academic position in California in the summer.

He maintained his departure had no bearing on possible indictments against either the President or the First Lady, but the White House was secretly jubilant.

The joy was shortlived. Asian links to Mr Hubbell, a former Clinton golfing friend released from jail last week after serving 16-months for Whitewater fraud, have served to stir the embers of the failed Arkansas land deal.

Fleeing "the Fifth" is a move that is not usually used to block the submission of financial records. And the unusual step may prove provocative to congressional investigators.

At one time Hillary Clinton's law partner, Mr Hubbell has been implicated in both the Whitewater and campaign finance investigations. He was ordered to produce documents to Congress about payments that he received from Clinton allies after he resigned from the Justice Department amid the growing Whitewater scandal in 1994. Mr Starr had also been investigating Mr Hubbell's receipt of \$325,000 (£200,000) in fees from various sources.

Two other central figures in the funding controversy, Charles Yeh Lin Tria, a Taiwanese former Arkansas restaurateur, and Pauline Kanchanalak, a Thai businesswoman, have also instructed lawyers not to accept subpoenas from the Senate.

The White House said it "respected" the decisions made under advice of counsel but said Mr Clinton wanted "all the facts to come out as quickly as possible".



Starr: relief at his departure shortlived



The space shuttle Discovery makes a rare night-time landing at Florida's Kennedy Space Centre yesterday, ending a ten-day mission to complete a \$350 million (£217 million) overhaul of the Hubble Space Telescope. The astronauts made five spacewalks during the mission

## Love letters reveal Fidel's dialectic of romance

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID

SIX previously unknown love letters, written more than 40 years ago by Fidel Castro, were published here yesterday for the first time, revealing that big, bad, bearded dictator can occasionally be great "softie" too.

The letters, obtained from the Cuban President's estranged daughter and published in the newspaper ABC, were written by Señor Castro to Nany Revuelta, the wife of a Havana doctor with whom he had a passionate love affair.

Written in 1954 from a prison on Isla de Pinos, the letters are an intriguing blend of the tender and the dialectic. In one, he pays this awkward compliment to his lover: "I keep all your letters with me and study them more closely than I would a treatise on psychology."

In another, he orders her not to send him a record player — which she wanted to do — as such "luxury" in jail would "mortify" him.

Touchingly, he asks instead for a photograph of Señora Revuelta: "If you do not send me one I will be heartbroken. Why don't you send me more than one? You know I can't see you in person now."

There are some lines of great passion, composed in the stylised manner of a leader accustomed to giving speeches. "You are a woman. Women are the most delicate of all creatures in this world. My companion in happiness, in pleasure, in sentiment, in the past, present and future, in every minute and in a lifetime, you are in the most intimate recess of my heart, where I venerate you and hold you sacred."

In another letter, he writes: "One

idea is very much like another, yet lovers never tire of kissing. There are phrases that are like kisses, like honey that never dries. This for me is the secret of your letters. They are all delightful, giving me a pleasure of which I never tire. And they are all varied, like the stars, which shine with a different light each night."

There is also, sometimes, a boyish flavour: "Do you really love me? Swear to me! Even more than I do you?" he writes.

Elsewhere, nervously, he says: "Promise me that my letters don't bore you!" He chides his lover, though, for using a typewriter: "Haven't I told you to write by hand instead of on a machine? If that takes too much time, I won't mind if your letters are shorter. But I do love your delicate handwriting, so feminine, so unmistakable." In another letter, he scolds her for

addressing him as *amigo* and not as Fidel. Inevitably, though, Señor Castro's politics intrude, often with a great clang. Sentences after writing of his love for Señora Revuelta, he rages against "injustice", demanding that the State "triple taxes on the rich" and all those who wallow in luxury.

In describing his daily routine, his reading habits are revealed as rather predictable: "I lie down in bed every night at 11, and read Karl Marx till I fall asleep."

In his penultimate missive from prison, he writes the following, almost as if it were a caricature of a love letter from a jailed revolutionary: "I believe that love also has its dialectic: thesis, antithesis and synthesis — just like a revolution, which would not exist without a counter-revolution."

Leading article, page 23

## Havana angered by exiles' planned fly-past

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

CUBAN exiles are once again on a collision course with the Government of Fidel Castro over plans for a group of 15 aircraft which plan to drop wreaths over the Straits of Florida near the spot where Cuban MiGs shot down two civilian planes, killing all on board.

American officials say they have briefed Havana on the peaceful intentions of a fleet of 15 aircraft which plan to drop wreaths over the Straits of Florida near the spot where Cuban MiGs shot down two civilian planes, killing all on board.

But Cuba is not happy with the event, which it regards as an act of political provocation, and warned that it "will not permit any type of violation of our territory".

Washington has told Cuban exiles to watch their step and to stay well outside Cuba's 12-mile territorial limits. American officials are especially alarmed by exiles' plans to fly two former Royal Air Force Provost jet trainers, still bearing British military markings.

Officials said the 1950s turbo jet planes, which are collectors items normally exhibited at air shows, may be subject to a restriction limiting them to an area no more than 44 miles south of the Florida Keys, well short of the site for Monday's ceremony. Just in case, US officials plan to monitor the straits with satellite and radar to avoid another confrontation with Cuban warplanes.

The US Atlantic Command also has 30 warships and 100 aircraft currently undergoing military exercises in the Caribbean. However, at the Pentagon, Ken Bacon, a Defence spokesman, said the US military did not "plan any different procedures or heightened alerts on February 24".

The incident last year plunged US-Cuban relations back into a Cold War freeze which shows no signs of warming, and also resulted in an ongoing trade dispute between Europe and Washington over American efforts to extend the reach of its economic embargo against Cuba to punish foreign investors in the island.

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AN EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER THE TIMES

## Exclusive screenings of The Crucible

Readers of *The Times* have the chance to enjoy an exclusive preview screening of *The Crucible*, starring Academy Award winner Daniel Day-Lewis, Winona Ryder and Joan Allen. Arthur Miller wrote the screenplay for the film which is directed by Nicholas Hytner (who also directed the award winning *The Madness of King George*). Four tokens and the voucher entitle you to TWO complimentary seats for a screening of *The Crucible* on Monday, February 24.

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CHANGING TIMES

## Sweden's welfare ministers fight shy of rendezvous with monetary union

## Euro-sceptic women run the show in Amazonia

THERE is a British lager lost view of Swedish women which traces a route from the bouncy actresses in *I Am Curious - Yellow*, through Britt Ekland to Ulrika Jonsson, the *Gladiator* star. The cliché centre on Nordic blondeness and a certain lithe athleticism. Well, there are still blondes in Sweden, but the news is that they now run the country and a good many of them are trying to steer the Government away from a rendezvous with European monetary union.

An oddity of the Swedish Cabinet is that exactly half its members are women and they occupy 11 far from marginal portfolios: foreign affairs, agriculture, employment, social welfare, health, justice, transport and environment among them. One woman, Mona Sahlin, 39, narrowly missed becoming Prime Minister last year — she used her government credit card to buy nappies and chocolate for her children — and another is deputy head of the trade union congress. The public services union is led by a woman. Amazonia has taken over in the north.

Since most of the Cabinet posts occupied by women re-

## STOCKHOLM FILE

by ROGER BOYES



late directly to the welfare state, which is being pared back in the rush to meet the Maastricht criteria for EMU, it is not surprising that female ministers are among the most Euro-sceptical.

Some owe their appointments directly to Göran Persson, the Prime Minister, and are reluctant to depart publicly from the official line of "wait and see" on the euro. A scattered few, such as the Agriculture Minister, are enthusiasts. But, in common with the women running the trade unions and ordinary Swedish female voters, many are quietly hostile. Only if a solid case can be made for the job-creating merits of the euro will the mood shift.

Ulrika Messing plays a pivotal role in this calculation. She is the Employment Minister and, at 29, the youngest member of the Cabinet. Her profile is typical for the new

breed of women politicians. She did not go to university and rose quickly through the ranks of the Social Democratic Party: she was elected to parliament at 23.

Miss Messing is an unmarried mother and during the week her son, Pontus, five, is cared for by her partner, an unemployed chef. Opposition deputies sneer that she cannot be much of an Employment Minister if she is unable even to find a job for the man she lives with.

"Since there is not a great demand for full-time restaurant chefs, my partner is studying maths and computer sciences to improve his prospects," she explains.

He is, in short, one of the many thousands on training schemes who, added together with the registered unemployed, bring Sweden's jobless rate to 13 per cent.

The growing influence of women on the political system has forced the Government to overhaul its working methods. Margot Wallström, the Minister of Culture, 40, conducts most of her departmental business from home in Karlstad, 190 miles south of Stockholm. She drops off her nine-year old at the local school, takes her 16-month-old toddler son to the day-care centre and then enters her

study for the morning video conference with her civil servants in Stockholm. Working with document scanners, modems and television monitors, she keeps up this rhythm from Thursday night until Tuesday lunchtime when she travels to Stockholm for Cabinet meetings or embarks on foreign trips.

The reason for this unusual work pattern is the death of her three-day-old son five years ago. The death, she says, made her change her priorities but did not diminish her political ambitions. "My youngest son does not understand the job I do. All he cares about is whether I am there to put him to bed."

The slow conversion of Sweden into an Amazonian state has also made the country think more deeply about what constitutes political success or failure.

Ms Sahlin's meteoric rise in the Social Democratic Party — from a drifting dishwasher with no school-leaving certificate to prime ministerial candidate — came unstuck over money. Yet Gudrun Schymann, the head of the Left Party, turned up visibly drunk at many critical political meetings and slurred her way through conference speeches without an eyebrow being raised. Eventually she went to a clinic to dry out and is now back firmly in charge of her party.

The assessment seems to be: women voters feel sympathy for women politicians with health problems, but are the most censorious if there is any hint of financial corruption.



Mona Sahlin, who narrowly missed becoming Prime Minister after she was censured for using her government credit card to buy chocolate for her children

## Ice worm eats into Denmark

DENMARK is in the midst of a fierce debate about an ice-worm. That was the code name for a secret American project to make Greenland into a huge nuclear base capable of wiping out much of the Soviet arsenal during the Cold War.

After the building of the Berlin Wall and the Cuba missile crisis in the 1960s, the Pentagon came up with the idea of building a system of tunnels 312 miles east of the American airbase in Thule on Greenland. There would be firing ramps for 600 medium-range nuclear missiles which, soaring over the North Pole, could have reached 80 per cent of the strategic targets in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The scope was huge: 2,500 miles of piping was supposed to be laid under the Greenland ice. 11,000 American technicians were earmarked for Project Ice-Worm and the cost was estimated at \$2.4 billion.

The base was never built but the revelations — by the Danish Foreign Policy Institute — have rattled Copenhagen. Since the war governments have assured Danes that, despite Nato membership, nuclear weapons would never be stationed in Denmark.

Yet the United States appears to have had nuclear-equipped aircraft in Thule — one crashed in 1968. Danes are angry that past governments could have let themselves in for this kind of blindfolded membership of Nato and are wondering how many more secrets are hidden below the ice.

## Open government

NOT many British politicians, one suspects, could survive the Swedish system of government. Public scrutiny of credit card receipts topped the Social Democrat crown princess, Mona Sahlin. Under Swedish law anyone is allowed to read the Prime

Minister's incoming and outgoing mail. A few letters to statesmen and on matters of security are classified, but it is quite legal to visit the Prime Minister's mail room and flick through his communications with President Clinton or European leaders.

## Danish leader quits over drink driving

FROM CHRISTOPHER FOLLETT IN COPENHAGEN

HANS ENGELL, the Danish Conservative leader, resigned as party chairman yesterday after a car crash — he was found to have broken drink driving limits. "I have made a serious mistake and must take the consequences. We stand ahead of a decisive political period with several elections ahead and there must be

no doubt about the party's prime ministerial candidate," he said in a statement.

Although his party commands less electoral support than the main opposition Liberals, he was seen as a potential candidate for Prime Minister if a centre-right government were returned to power.

In the accident, Mr Engell swerved off the Copenhagen-Elsinore motorway and hit a lorry, leaving his car a wreck, and injuring himself superficially. No

body else was involved. Police breathalysed him and found him to be well over the legal limit.

A former journalist, Mr Engell, 48, was a former justice minister. He is to remain leader of the parliamentary Conservative group. Political commentators point to Anne Birgitte Lundholdt, the party's political spokeswoman and a former energy and industry minister, as a likely successor.

## Dead boar too 'hot' for French hunters

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE ancient sport of wild boar hunting, enjoyed by danger-loving French kings and peasants for centuries, has become potentially even more perilous with the discovery that a beast killed recently in eastern France was highly radioactive.

A group of hunters in the forest of Saint-Jean d'Ormont in the Vosges region bagged six wild boar on December 8 last year, one of which was found, after testing, to have three times the highest accepted safe level of radioactivity.

The radioactive cloud from Chernobyl passed directly over the region in 1986, and every year since, the French Ministry of Agriculture has carried out extensive tests on milk, water, mushrooms, and other local produce. Until this week, the ministry's tests had shown no abnormal rise in radioactivity, but the discovery of the radioactive wild boar has raised fresh fears that lingering contamination from the Ukrainian nuclear disaster may be worse than supposed.

Two experts from the French Office of Protection from Radioactivity were dispatched to the Vosges this week to carry out further tests on the suspect wild boar or sanglier meat to try to determine the cause of the contamination.

The discovery of the radioactive boar was fortuitous. "A hunter gave a piece of wild boar to a friend in the veterinary services, who carried out his own tests without telling us," Christian Demange, the Mayor of the nearby town of Saint-Dié, who was one of the hunters, said.

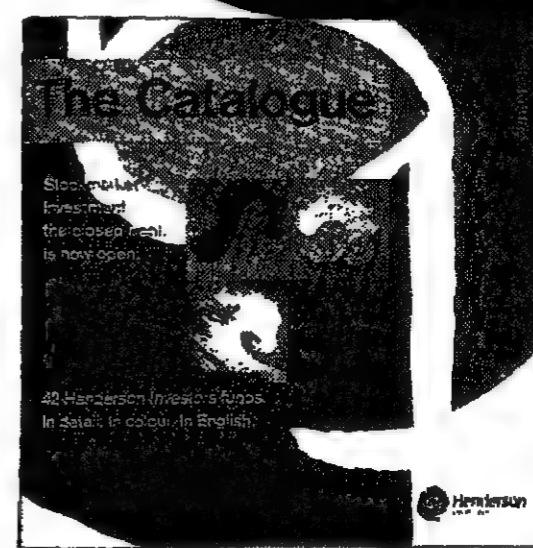
Experts at the Independent Centre for Research into Radioactivity in Paris said the levels of caesium-137 and caesium-134 found in the meat were "characteristic of the Chernobyl cloud".

The sanglier is the basis of some of France's most famed dishes, as well as wild boar pâté, but researchers insisted that boar hunters are still more likely to be gored than poisoned by the beasts.

At this level of contamination, a fully grown wild boar weighing 340 lb would have to be consumed before exceeding the recommended health limit, an achievement of which only the cartoon boar hunter Obélix the Gaul would be capable.

"They ran very fast," Monsieur Demange said of last December's boar hunt. "Now I know why. They were nuclear powered."

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**OPERA**  
Mobile phones and cameras find their way into English Touring Opera's production of *The Marriage of Figaro*



**CONCERT**  
Hidden surprises as Michael Tilson Thomas and the LSO celebrate Debussy at the Barbican

# THE TIMES ARTS



**ON MONDAY**  
Melvyn Bragg in praise of one of the greatest institutions in the land: the lending library



**ON MONDAY**  
How four of the most enterprising West End hits of recent years have found their way onto the TV screen

MICHAEL Tilson Thomas revealed on Thursday the first panel of his triptych of beautifully ordered programmes celebrating Debussy — *Pain of Dreams*, part of Radio 3's vast tribute to the music of our time, *Sounding the Century* (Hilary Finch writes).

Nocturnes — for Tilson Thomas the starting point of modern music — and *La Mer* framed an evening of less frequently heard solo-orientated works. Yet, already within *Nocturnes* the solitary voices were there. Tilson Thomas's cueing of several of the London Symphony Orchestra's wind and brass principals for applause reflected his emphasis on the orchestra as a band of soloists in this music, teasing out the illusion of improvisation.

Solo writing as display, though, was anathema to Debussy, and both his *Rhapsody for Clarinet* and the *Rhapsody for Saxophone and Orchestra* were wheeled out of him in

## Canvas of note

**CONCERT**  
LSO/Tilson Thomas  
Barbican/Radio 3

spite of himself. The first was written as a competition piece for conservative students; the second as a response to a persistent American lady who had been prescribed the saxophone as relief for respiratory problems.

Andrew Marriner's imaginative clarinet playing took his *Rhapsody* far beyond the virtuosic testing grounds. And John Harle relished both the haunting calls and replies to his orchestral woodwind col-

leagues, as well as the Moorish arabesques coed in by the rattle of a tambourine. The saxophone, though, remained underexploited. Not so the human voice in the *Trois Ballades de François Villon*. The Swedish baritone Peter Matti's grasp of Debussy's recreation of the medieval archaism of these texts was total. He brightly animated each word of the opening love-song, and the prayer to the Virgin found a new transference in his voice.

The real revelation of the evening, though, was the LSO's understated performance of *Berceuse Heroïque*: the contradiction within its title reflecting the unease with which Debussy fulfilled this commission for the war effort in 1914. Britten surely remembered its dark harp and cello sonorities and its tremulous string chords when he pondered the images of this war in the aftermath of a conflict Debussy was never to see.

## OPERA IN CAMBRIDGE AND LONDON

# Techno crass

There is only one place in which a mobile phone is more annoying than in a railway carriage, and that is on the operatic stage. It is becoming every bit as common in one as in the other, and in the latter it seems to serve as a talisman to reassure everyone concerned — director, audience and sponsors — that here is a production which will be regularly accessible, comprehensible, communicative: a veritable one-to-one, no less.

English Touring Opera have also fallen for the old trick. At the Cambridge Arts Theatre, *Figaro* and Susanna are summoned by one Bartolo

**The Marriage of Figaro**  
Cambridge

addresses his first aria to one, Basilio, in case you were wondering, is a pimp who teaches aerobics (although they don't do a lot for his vocal muscle); the Count is a high-class photographer (more Kookai than Snowdon); Susanna the new model/PA he has his eyes and hands on.

Meanwhile, *Figaro* and Cherubino hang around, trying to fit rather awkwardly into the general plan of things, while the Countess watches a video of Stephen Medcalf's Glyndebourne *Figaro*.

Medcalf, by the way, directs this *Figaro* too. He has doctored Amanda Holden's translation to accommodate words such as "Prozac" and "the Count's floppy". That is the description of Susanna — and it is taken at its word.

And herein lies the pity. For

under the glitz, laboured details of this production lie a vacuum of characterisation and idea. Susanna (a pert, soubretteish Anna-Clare Monk) remains a floppy — which is not quite what Mozart's music would have us believe. The dark complexity of the relationship between the Count and Countess is drawn only sketchily: what a missed opportunity with an elegant mahogany baritone such as Riccardo Simonetti, and artistry of real substance and maturity within the burnished soprano of Elena Ferrari.

But when this *Figaro* comes your way — to Foote next week, on to Brighton, and then to 13 more destinations between now and May — enjoy Matthew Hargreaves's resonant *Figaro*, Michelle Walton's full-voiced Cherubino and Andrew Greenwood's lively pacing in the pit. But remember, there is a lot more to it than meets the lens of Medcalf's camera.



HILARY FINCH Matthew Hargreaves and Anna-Clare Monk in *Figaro*

## Hidden talents

Trinity College of Music  
Camden Centre, NW1

There were too many instances of the willful misreading of young artists in the Trinity College of Music's triple bill of works inspired by Cocteau, a potentially engaging evening mounted in collaboration with the London Contemporary Dance School and the Rose Bruford College at the Camden Centre.

There was little to complain about musically, though: the wise and experienced Diego Masson led the willing College Symphony Orchestra through as lean and sprightly accounts of *Saïa's Parade* (1917) and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* (1927) as the hall's resonant acoustics allowed (the typewriter was inaudible in the Saïa, although the pistol shots rang out bravely).

There was no attempt at the historical in *Parade* (Pisces, constructivist costumes and so on), probably wisely: the young dancers performed amiable, defiantly non-contemporary choreography by Mark Baldwin that was as anonymous as their costumes.

Things started to go wrong with Julie Hollander's production of Poulenc's *La Voix humaine* (1959). The orchestra

conductor, Dominic Wheeler, overwhelmed her too often. It was not altogether his fault.

Hollander's messy staging of the Stravinsky was jam-packed with "ideas". Jocaasta had one — or was it two? — alter ego. Creon had outside hands but, since he was in the balcony, half the audience couldn't see him. We were treated to a slide-show of river views. The Narrator, giving a fair impersonation of Virginia Bottomley, donned Jocaasta's frock and went off with Oedipus in a false happy end. Video cameras supplied arty little freeze-frames.

In an ideal world, directors of students would ensure that their charges are both visible and audible, then start having "ideas". Two, however, showed great promise: the bass Paul Purnins as Tiresias (brutal sound, imposing presence) and Rebecca Smith (Jocaasta), a spirited *spiritus* in the making. The title role is a killer for a young singer, and Glenn Branley coped with it honourably.

RODNEY MILNES

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## OPINION

Classical CDs: it's not the quantity that counts these days, it's the quality



## FILM

Sixties director Sam Fuller is alive and well and living in Paris, and the subject of a Channel 4 season

## THE TIMES ARTS

## THEATRE

Only towards the end of Mick Mahoney's *Swaggers* does a proper stage play start to emerge



## GOING OUT

From Peter Bowles in the West End to the big pop concerts: all the top attractions are in The Directory

## Spice Girls sell, but noble they're not

There are few sights more distressing than that of a record company's fat cat shouting about how much cash he has made from selling pop to glibble kids. But put that such-bash distaste on hold, you unpatriotic lot! This week it is British fat cats who are strutting and preening. New figures reveal that our pop songs are doing for British exports what the Spice Girls do for our tired old ticker. CD sales are booming. Profits are up, up, up. Across the globe, Britannia rules the airwaves.

It's all good news, then? Well, apparently not. In Britain no silver lining comes without a cloud, and this cloud hangs over classical music. Even as the pop moguls hand round the champagne and obligatory splits at the Brits Awards on Monday, the classical music world will be shrouded in *Götterdämmerung* gloom.

Classical albums, it seems, now account for just 7.5 per cent of CD sales. True, they never did great business. The worry today, how-

ever, is not the quantity being sold so much as the quality. Aside from "celebrity" discs (*Baroque with Placido* and *Schubert with Placido*) and cult records such as Gorecki's *Third Symphony* that are plugged incessantly on Classic FM, the only classical CDs now selling well are compilations, repackaged ditties from old recordings. For new, full-price CDs of mainstream repertoire there is almost no demand. Everything has been recorded, perfectly, 12 times already.

That didn't matter in the days when record companies were run by cultured people. It was accepted that profits from pop songs would cross-subsidise classical records. Pop brought cash, classics brought prestige: that was the theory.

Alas, such benign management was long ago flushed out of the big record companies. Hard-nosed marketing men bark the orders

now, and classical artists must make handsome profits or be axed. It's a regrettable change of attitude, because by subsidising classical CDs the record business was doing its bit to support orchestral and choral life. But the change is here to stay.

So is the classical music world crumbling as a result? It is easy to jump to this conclusion. Indeed, one British journalist has made a career out of writing the obituary of orchestral life, over and over again. And prophecies of doom are often self-fulfilling. If enough people become convinced that classical music is dying, it will.

Yet I believe that classical music has a great future. Am I mad? Probably. But consider this first, although the major record companies may have given up on the classics, plenty of independents are filling the gap. By using little-

## WEEK IN THE ARTS



RICHARD MORRISON

known performers and pricing their CDs sensibly, brilliant labels such as Naxos are achieving phenomenal sales.

And the incidental fact that some allegedly famous classical

performers no longer enjoy the endorsement of big record companies is no bad thing. For years they have been charging grossly inflated performance fees on the strength of their supposed crowd-pulling, CD-selling powers. Now that this charade is exposed, our opera houses and orchestras should holdily negotiate much lower fees, cut ticket prices, and attract younger audiences.

Secondly, Britain's concert life now is incomparably richer than it was in any mythical "golden age". Think back just 30 years. London had no Barbican or Queen Elizabeth Hall, Birmingham no Symphony Hall, Manchester no Bridgewater Hall, Glasgow no Royal Concert Hall, Ulster no Waterfront, Poole no Arts Centre, Snape no Maltings... you can fill in the rest. Classical music was stuffily presented for a few hours a

day on Radio 3; now it comes round the clock on both Radio 3 and Classic FM. The great British youth orchestra movement had barely begun: now it is a national glory. And so on. I am not complacent; but any theory that classical music in Britain is retreating in tatters is demonstrably bonkers.

Thirdly, the CD will not be the predominant musical medium for much longer. Classical musicians should be thinking five years into the future — when films, concerts, operas and ballets are piped into every home and school through the Internet or digital TV. The first orchestras quick-witted enough to exploit this potentially vast market will hit a jackpot bigger than anything scooped during the boom years of stereo recording.

Finally, orchestras have a poten-

tial ace to play, and it is this. The pop business largely reduces music to "product" and us, the public, to the status of passive imbibers, required only to buy CDs and play them. By contrast, the most exciting trend in the orchestral world is to involve schools, indeed whole communities, as creative partners. The aim is to remind people that it is more rewarding to be a music-maker than a mere music-consumer. And that task is an increasingly crucial one, because in our materialist age the overwhelming pressure is all the other way: for the public to buy more and more, and do less and less.

Of course classical musicians can never beat pop groups in the commercial marketplace. But why should they? Who says that music's value can be measured only on a balance sheet? Classical musicians should stop fretting about dubious statistics. The noble ideals and aspirations which made them take up music in the first place are more relevant today than ever.

## It's all Viennese, cross my jam

IF YOU feel like believing what Mick Mahoney has to say about London villains, you can try out his rhyming slang on the next likely lad you want to postpone dealing with. "Moon," you say, and he will know this is short for mooncrater, ie, "later". If he stares back as blankly as the Moon itself, then either he or Mahoney are having you on, mate. Or "five-bar", as they may well say down at Kojak's or wherever the mob are hanging out these days. Me, I think Mick's definitely got his tongue in his bubble.

This is his tenth play, the first for quite a while, but back in the early Eighties he was churning them out, raw slices of street life that earned him accolades for telling it like it is. For all I know, Nance and Dee and John (known as "the great Moonie"), who work in a swag shop run by Michael and Tess, are all accurately telling it like it is today. It just sounds too much, that's all I'm saying, cross my jam.

A swagger deals in fake designer clothes and perfumes, and as Michael also deals in stolen software this takes him into areas where you don't want to be slow in paying what you owe. I mean, the Baileys aren't the sort of people you cross at all, let alone lightly. The great Moonie has just come out of jail and is sleeping on the premises. Peter Hugo Daly plays him as a shambolic sort of character, but possessed of

Swaggers  
BAC, SW11

a watchful eye and a permanent broken smile that must be seriously traumatising his facial muscles. He's actually some kind of murderer, but basically the hero.

Dee (Carol Harrison) and her niece Nance (Rhona Mitra, utterly riveting in red plastic) belong to a criminal aristocracy that goes back 150 years, so why they demean themselves with the likes of Michael or Tess (Rupert Penry-Jones, Helena Cullen) I never understood. But there was a great deal I failed to understand, even when I had picked my way to the end of a slang-packed sentence and worked out the gist. Mahoney seems to have based his play's structure on television soaps: lots of aggro, voices raised, quick exits.

When the storylines began cohering towards the end a stage play started to emerge from the scraps. I specially liked Dee's "I want to be loved! I want big arguments in Ikea!" It didn't sound real, but then the more Mahoney, who also directs, aimed for the real the more false it sounded. Or the more Viennese, as they probably say at Kojak's.

JEREMY KINGSTON

W. Stephen  
Gilbert on a  
Sixties film guru  
getting the TV  
treatment

The first time I saw *Shock Corridor* was at a late show at the Screen on Islington Green way back in the early Seventies. The queue stretched into and up Upper Street. By the time we got in, the auditorium was chock-full so we found ourselves squinting four deep on the floor ahead of the front row of the stalls.

Made in 1963, the movie was what we then were apt to call "a blast". It just took you by the scruff and shook you until you yelled for mercy.

*Shock Corridor* is the sixteenth of the 23 movies made by Samuel Fuller. Born in 1911, Fuller is alive, pretty well, living in Paris and one of the last few survivors of the buccannery tradition of movie-making that died out in the Sixties. He has been a true auteur, customarily taking the credit "written, produced and directed by", even when working within the Hollywood studio system.

Though filming for Zanuck at Fox and Cohn at Columbia, Fuller chose to keep it small, tight and cheap. Most of his movies run under 90 minutes and were made inside a month. Many of his scenes are taken all in a single shot, requiring from him the discipline of paring scripts to the bone and of editing that never holds a scene beyond its use to the action.

Stephen Frears, who keeps one directorial foot in Hollywood, acknowledges Fuller's inspiration in trying to maintain such a balance. "He wasn't going to do what they told him because that would have bored him," he says, "but he needed the system to make his films. That's what we all want to do, to be in and out of



Sam Fuller, the master at making the most film for the least money, whose work is the subject of a new Channel 4 series and introductory documentary

it at the same time. That's why people like Marty revere him."

Marty — Martin Scorsese — is among several contemporary American movie-makers who talk warmly and analytically about Fuller in a documentary, *The Typewriter, the Rifle and the Movie Camera*, which will introduce a Channel 4 late-night season of nine Fuller classics. *Shock Corridor* ends the run, on March 26. The opener is *Park Row*, a masterpiece not seen on any screen for two decades.

*Park Row* is a thrilling, moving, hugely dynamic story of "the birthplace and graveyard of great headlines". Fuller's fifth movie, it is his most excitingly realised, with pell-mell travelling shots up and down the studio-built street and his trademark crane shots that abruptly give a (false) sense of opulence.

"That's how you learn to make films cheaply," explains Frears. "Don't muck about. Then, when you can, do a great shot. If you shoot a scene in one, you can ride the schedule. Once you get behind, your back's to the wall." The downside of low-budget filmmaking is that you often have to accept humdrum performances. Fuller only once worked with a true headliner star — Barbara Stanwyck in *Forty Guns* — and cunningly he holds back her first dialogue scene for almost 20 minutes. But many second-division players found that Fuller characters raised their own game: Robert Stack in *House of Bamboo*, Cliff Robertson in *Underworld USA* and, along with Richard Widmark, Thelma Ritter, who was never finer than in Fuller's *Pickup on South Street*.

In the documentary, Fuller's speech to fellow filmmaker Tim Robbins veers between the sharp and the plain loopy. He clearly enjoys playing the guru. The producer of *Train-Spotting*, Andrew Macdonald, kept a video diary at the Edinburgh Film Festival the year Fuller was a guest, and old Sam gave Macdonald and his writer John Hodge hours of interview and free advice about their unrealised project that would become *Shallow Grave*. And he cautioned them on handling Hollywood: "Don't worry about the ageing blondes clinging on to you at the swimming pool. Just make what you want to make."

Fuller's own preoccupations — orientalism, the conduct of war and the fate of war veterans, race hatred, the rehabilitation of prostitutes, organised crime — make him in varying degrees unfashionable, but his broad themes and qualities — energy, revenge, redemption, betrayal, creativity — are as urgent as ever.

Perhaps the madness in

Fuller's work speaks most directly to us. In *Shock Corridor*, a crusading journalist puts his own sanity on the line and gets himself incarcerated in a mental institution. Andrew Macdonald reports that he, Hodge and the director Danny Boyle have been asked by both Paramount and Disney to remake this extraordinary picture, "because of the

doctors angle, I imagine". As it happens, when they were talking to the guru, Macdonald found a video of *Shock Corridor* at John Menzies, bought it and got Fuller to sign it. You could say Fuller's signature is on a lot of contemporary young independent filmmaking.

Channel 4's Sam Fuller season begins on Tuesday night

## EXCLUSIVE OFFER THE TIMES

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The rich do not need new planning orders to help them build grand houses — but owners of older piles are struggling

## Stately homes of England in the lurch

Simon Jenkins

The end was nigh. The medieval house was as down-at-heel as its ancestral owner. But Miss Matilda Talbot of Lacock Abbey could not resist her love of entertaining. Her "hops" in the great hall on winter evenings could not be refused without offence. She combed Wiltshire for young ladies, who came "exceptionally plain and utterly speechless". As James Lees-Milne recalls in his diary, "To an ancient granophone which required winding every two minutes, we danced the Roger de Coverley while the fog swirled against the Gothic windows, and indoors a green yule log emitted such dense smoke that the guests were blinded and choking."

In the 1930s, the stately homes of England were collapsing into the arms of the National Trust or Mother Ruin. Deserted by their inheritors, crippled by debt, the servants dead or fled, the silver sold, they faced extinction. One by one, they were demolished, institutionalised or nationalised. For half a century, that has been their perceived fate. To take on a stately home, let alone to build a new one, has been seen as a clear sign of madness.

Yet last week an intriguing passage appeared in a dry Whitehall document called PPG7 (Revised). These are the planning orders by which Britain is truly governed. They have more impact on the ap-

pearance and character of the nation than a hundred subsidies, policy initiatives and short-term gimmicks emanating from Downing Street. Yet they pass by unnoticed in the Westminster chatter. The country they govern is one which Westminster rarely visits, namely provincial Britain.

It was a previous PPG, issued by Nicholas Ridley, that spawned the out-of-town shopping centres, caravan sites and bungalow estates that are ruining more British landscape than anything since the suburban sprawl before the last war. Planners and inspectors were encouraged to ignore town centre shopping, consume countryside and pour traffic onto rural roads. The Ridley document is recognised to have been a catastrophe, but the damage is done.

The new guidance, from John Gummer, cannot undo this damage. But it wants new country development to avoid such spoliation. It worries over design and seeks to rectify some of the ugliness associated with modern farming. Countryside should be respected and "isolated houses" avoided. So far so good. However, and this brings us back to Lacock, some isolated houses are a good thing. A new

house is welcome if it can "add to the tradition of the Country House which has done so much to enhance the English countryside". Such a house must be "clearly of the highest quality, truly outstanding in terms of its architecture and landscape design". As he years to be progenitor of new cathedrals and new bridges, Mr Gummer years also for new stately homes.

My first thought is that ministers crave landed-gentry status after the election. As they salivate over the options flowing from post-privatisation directorships, they already plan the barony and the Barsetshire estate. A neo-Wrenaissance pile by Quinlan Terry in the Cotswolds would do nicely. But PPG7 must not stand in the way. Hence Mr Gummer's little easement.

This is all most odd. Large country houses are still being built in England. The architectural historian, John Martin Robinson, estimates that 400 substantial "country houses" have been built in England since the war, with no help from PPG7. Architects such as Julian Bicknell, John Outram, Derys Lashun, Robert Adam and Quinlan Terry have designed them. Families such as Getty, Rausing, de Ferranti,

Baring, Seimbury and Westminster have insulated the requisite fortunes. The houses may not rank with Blebeins. Nobody today wants a hundred bedrooms and everyone wants privacy. But these houses have rescued the English countryside from golf courses, agribusinesses or worse fates. They are welcome and they are happening.

Mr Gummer's help is needed elsewhere on this front. It is rescuing the 150 or so existing big houses in England and Wales at imminent risk of dereliction. They and their parks (catalogued by Save Britain's Heritage) are desperate for salvation, and without anyone needing to seize existing countryside for new building. They include Thoresby Hall in Nottinghamshire, Astley Castle in Warwickshire, Gwyrch

Castle on the North Wales coast, Rolleston House in Devon, Gilsdale in Durham, Downe Hall, a Palladian mansion in Dorset whose park is on the brink of becoming a housing estate. Mr Gummer might attend to Tretworth Court in Gloucestershire, by his favourite architect, Samuel Peploe.

The National Trust has exhausted its ability to come to the aid of such casualties. The emphasis is back on the private sector. This sector needs no help in building new buildings, but suffers extraordinary government hostility in salvaging old ones. Mr Gummer still imposes VAT on repairs to old buildings, while lifting it from new ones. Grants to restore private houses have been curtailed. Private owners cannot receive lottery money. Running a stately home is to endure a fiercely discriminatory super-tax.

What is most astonishing about the past 30 years is not the rescue by public authorities of so many doomed great houses. It is that devoted private owners have stepped forward (or stayed on) to prop up the rest. I can think of nothing bleaker than spending years pouring money into an

ancient pile, its rooms leaking and deserted, its children gone, help impossible to find, the weekdays long and lonely. Yet flip through the official *Historic Houses Guide* and you can read off the names of the wealthy, the dedicated, the eccentric and the mad who have picked up the banner of stately home ownership and carried on the fight.

There are the Cobhams of Hagley, the Comptons of Newby, the Howards of Castle Howard, the Phillips of Kentwell, the Seymours of Thrumpton, the Saunders Watsons of Rockingham, the Cobbolds of Knobworth, the Montagus of Beaulieu, the Weeks of Penhow, the Proby of Elton, and dozens more. I doubt if one of them is keeping up the house to make money. They are struggling to make money to keep up the house. These are the small platoons of private enterprise that we should honour. Here is where PPGs should be aimed and incentives and honours given. Time was when "every great estate deserved a title". Perhaps those times are here again.

What has truly changed over the past 50 years is the acceptance that great houses are not just personal property. When Lees-Milne traipsed

round the "embarrassed" estates of England for the National Trust in the 1930s, he met utter dismay that estates should be alienated from families that had held them for centuries. At Attingham in Shropshire, Lord Berwick was too humiliated even to talk about a sale. He struggled and eventually died. During negotiations at Lyme in Cheshire, Lord Newton "sighed from morning to night, while Lady Newton lay prostrate on the sofa". As the estate had become liabilities and it all seemed unfair. With some difficulty, the Trust tried to keep some link between a family and its house after transfer. It was not easy.

Today we treat most great houses as in some sense the nation's collective inheritance. Most were built from the tithes, rents and taxes of the community. Like churches, they belonged as much to neighbours as to families. Mark Girouard has shown that houses and castles were open to all comers at least into the 18th century. They were communities within communities.

The great house is its estate is Britain's most distinctive and lasting contribution to European culture. Nobody does them like us. Mr Gummer is right to hope that private owners can uphold that reputation. But he needs a different PPG. New country houses will build themselves. Old ones are the challenge.

## Tradition and the politics of Babel

Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi, traces the origins of our political crisis to the eclipse of Judaeo-Christian morality since the Enlightenment

The *Politics of Hope* is an unusual, in fact unique, book for a Chief Rabbi to have written. It is written, not for Jews especially, but for all of us as members of a liberal democratic society. It is not about religion, except in the most general sense that its central concern is about how we can learn to live peacefully, responsibly and graciously together — a concern which morality, politics, religion and secular humanism all share. To write it, I have had, as it were, to disrobe and immerse myself in literatures I had never before studied. I did so because of my concern about certain acute structural weaknesses in contemporary society, and my dismay at the quality and depth of our public conversation as we approach the millennium and think about our collective future. The book is about a certain kind of crisis within Western liberal democracies, and how it might be overcome by a new and more effective style of politics.

My argument can be stated simply. There are two concepts of a free society, one liberal, the other libertarian. For the past 50 years the libertarian view has prevailed. Shared by British and American politicians on the Left and Right, it maintains that a free society is ideally one in which individuals are left free to pursue their own choices. The central question of politics is whether this is best achieved by governments doing as much as possible or as little as possible. The maximalists argue that the task of the State is to give everyone as far as possible the resources with which to pursue their private vision of the good life. The minimalists argue that this is best done by the opposite strategy, namely by leaving as many resources as possible in the hands of individuals.

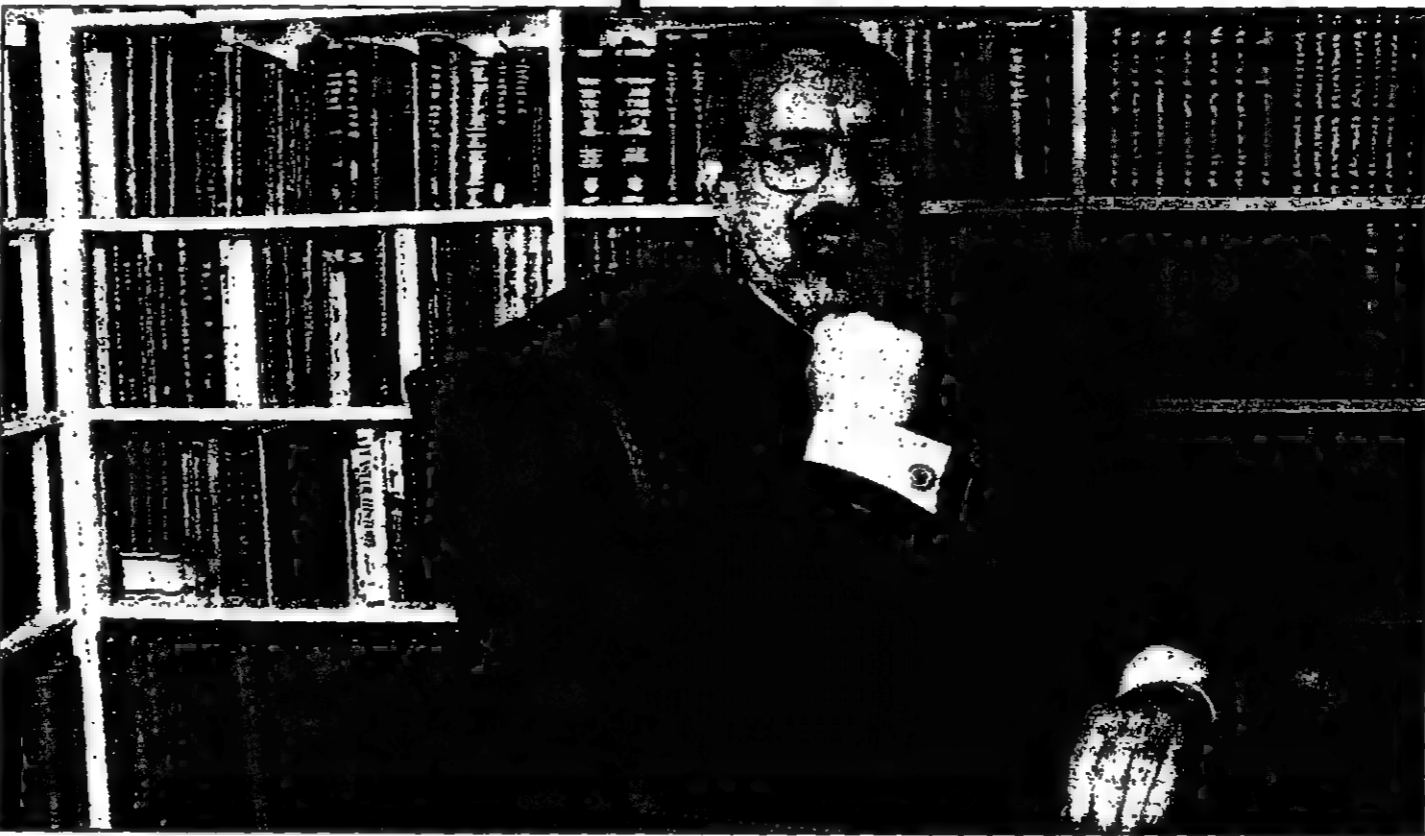
Philosophically, the debate has been between John Rawls and Robert Nozick. Economically, it has been between Keynes and Milton Friedman. Politically, it has been between the Roosevelt-Beveridge vision of a welfare state and the "small government" programmes of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. But both sides share an

ideal, however deeply they differ in the means they adopt to achieve it: namely, of an arena in which the State guarantees the freedom of the individual to realise his or her own choices. Morality has no part to play in politics beyond fair procedures and the transparency and accountability of governments. All significant moral decisions are to be made by individuals. Indeed, morality itself is a purely individual concern. On both views the key players — the only players — are the State and the individual. Beyond that, as Margaret Thatcher once said, "There is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families."

This is a tenable view, and there is only one thing to be said against it. It has been tried and it has failed. It has given rise to a social order — or more precisely, to a social disorder — more bleak than any within living memory. Today many parts of Britain and America are marked by vandalism, violent crime and a loss of civility; by the breakdown of the family and the widespread neglect of children; by an erosion of trust and a general loss of faith in the power of governments to cure some of our most deep-seated problems; and by a widespread sense that matters crucial to our future welfare are slipping beyond our control.

It is not my intention to criticise the past, second-guess the leaders of an earlier generation, or adopt the false righteousness of hindsight. The politics of the past have run their course, and we must search for a new way.

Fortunately, this is less difficult than it seems. We are able to go back to the writings of those who set out on the path towards a free society and reacquaint ourselves with what they had in mind. As soon as we do this we discover in many cases that their concerns are uncannily like ours, and they had wise things to say which we have since forgotten. Their view of politics was liberal rather than libertarian. Their central question was: how can we create a society in



Dr Sacks: to write *The Politics of Hope*, "I have had... to disrobe and immerse myself in literatures I had never before studied"

which everyone can participate, and everyone achieve the maximum possible dignity? Their answer was not to privatise morality and rule it out of order in political debate. Some important moral issues are private, but not all are. In particular, it is impossible to create a good society without a vigorous process of public debate and without some consensus about the kind

of society we wish to create. Nor is the creation of society a matter, simply, of state action on the one hand and the private choices of individuals on the other. Societies are made not just by states and individuals, but also and crucially by what we do, severally, freely and together, in a thousand local contexts and constituencies. If libertarianism is a politics of interests, liberalism is a politics of involvement.

The good news is that wherever this kind of politics has been tried, it works. Compared to libertarianism, it yields a social order in which we are less vulnerable and confused. Above all, it is the most powerful available antidote to despair, because it leaves us less exposed to forces beyond our

control, to decisions in which we do not have a part. These are my views, but not mine alone. Increasingly, they have come to be shared by philosophers, economists, social commentators and literary critics. Most importantly, they have begun to be adopted by politicians at both ends of the political spectrum — by Democrats and Republicans in America, and members of the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democratic parties in Britain. There was nothing wrong with the politics of collectivism and the politics of private initiative, but their greatest days lie in the past and we are ready for something different and more challenging. My name for it is: the politics of hope.

A vision once guided us, one that we loosely call the Judaeo-Christian tradition. It was not a single ethical system, more a related family of them. It did not answer all questions, and even when it was at its height, there were vexed moral debates. But it taught us moral habits. It gave us a framework of virtue, embodied ideals. It emphasised the value of institutions — the family, the school, the community — as vehicles through which one generation hands on its ideals to the next. In its broad outlines it was shared by poor and

rich alike, by miners, labourers, politicians, teachers, the police, judges, fellows of Oxbridge colleges and children in the village school. You could catch traces of its influence from pubs to pulpits to cricket matches. It bound us together as a nation and gave an entire society its bearings.

That tradition has been comprehensively displaced. In its stead has come a variety of substitutes: ethics of work and success, cults of physical fitness, consumerism and salvation-by-shopping, therapies, New Age mysticism, alternative lifestyles, sub and counter-cultures, resurgent ethnicities of multiple kinds, and Internet-surfing as a mode of global identity. Never before have we been faced with such kaleidoscopic variety, but it fails to cohere. It does not provide us with the resources to connect our present with an identifiable past and future. It does not lend structure and stability to our relationships. It does not connect our private desires with a larger purpose of which we are a part. It is less like music, more like noise.

The alternative world we have come to inhabit has its roots deep in history. In my book I follow it back to Hobbes in the 17th century. Others would date its genesis earlier still. It did not come into being as a result of Thatcherism or Reaganomics in the 1980s, or the "permissive society" of the 1960s, or the welfare state of the 1940s. Each of these merely carried further tendencies that were present long before. That is why serious thinkers have understood that what is really at stake in the present debate is the Enlightenment itself as an adequate account of human nature and rationality.

Many aspects of that revolution in thought were necessary and beneficial. We could not undo them, nor should we wish to. But in one aspect it was simply wrong, in its attempt to assimilate our understanding of humanity to science. The belief was that just as science was opening the way to limitless progress in our understanding and control of the physical world, so a scientific morality would create an order of rational, tolerant and benevolent human beings, free of the conflicts and prejudices of the past.

That was a noble undertaking, but like the Tower of Babel it was aimed too high, and the result is that we find it increasingly difficult to communicate with one another. We are left, like the builders of the tower, isolated and confused.

Fortunately, we are not without hope. The Judaeo-Christian heritage never disappeared, and it exists today as a great reservoir of moral energy and aspiration. Nor are we called on to abandon the heritage of the Enlightenment, for it taught us two things that must never be forgotten: that religion is not science, neither is it politics. Religion is not the best way of understanding what is; its domain is in the realm of what ought to be. Nor is it an appropriate vehicle of power. In these respects the Enlightenment was closer to truth than the religious establishments of the day.

But in one respect it simply failed to understand the nature of human society. We are not atoms, held together by the force-field of the State. We are children and parents, neighbours and friends. We are self-conscious beings, knowing what it is to feel the pain of loneliness, yet not willing to abdicate our selfishness in total fusion with others. We seek individuality and relationship — individuality through relationship. We learn to pronounce the "We" the better to be able to say "I". Thus is born the intricate dynamic of society, beginning with the family and extending outward, through which we learn to trust others and to act so that others can trust us. This requires us to internalise a complex of rules, virtues, dispositions and habits mediating between the self and others, allowing us to sustain relationships without the use or threat of force. As John Macmurray reminds us, these habits are precarious and need constant renewal. "The institutions by which society maintains itself are not natural," he writes. "They are artifacts, and they are maintained by effort in order to sustain the personal life of men and women, and to prevent a relapse into the barbarism of a nearly organic life." As we have come to know all too well in the 20th century, civilisation has a thin skin, and is easily wounded.

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The *Politics of Hope* (Jonathan Cape, £15.99) will be published on March 6.

On Monday, Jonathan Sacks argues that the renaissance of society is the antidote to despair

## High times

ONE OF the most dangerous artistic partnerships of recent years is once again on the cards. Ralph Steadman, anarchic cartoonist and wine lover, is about to team up with Hunter S. Thompson, drug-taking "gonzo" journalist, with whom he rampaged across America in the 1970s in the name of reportage. Steadman has been asked to

appear as a character witness in May on behalf of Thompson, whom he once described as one of the most evil men he knows, in a drink-drive case.

Thompson, who lives a hermit-like existence in Aspen, Colorado, with a Magnum 45 for company, was breathalysed returning from a party to celebrate victory in a

campaign to prevent the expansion of Aspen's airport. The police were waiting for me under the bridge like trolls," he said contemptuously of his arrest.

Steadman met Thompson in 1970 when they joined forces to cover the Kentucky Derby. Later, they collaborated to report on the America's Cup, when Steadman took drugs for the first time. "I kept asking what the pills were that Hunter was gobbling all the time, so he gave me one," he explains. "The experiment was not a success, ending with the reporter and his illustrator painting obscenities about the Pope on the hull of a yacht."

"I'm a different kind of person when I'm with Hunter," Steadman says. "The animal in me comes out." He adds that he will defend his friend to the hilt at the court case in May. "He's a fine, upstanding human being."

### Health scare

EDWINA CURRIE has been caught bunking off. After appearing mute and weary at an afternoon gathering of the EU Trade Committee, she failed to appear later in the day at a meeting of MPs and Sainsbury, the gay rights activist.



While Jack Straw, Chris Smith and Lord Russell listened to an especially apologetic note of absence, claiming Mrs Currie was still suffering from a particularly nasty bout of flu, she Currie was spotted looking into hearty canteen food with a female pal in the nearby Strangers Restaurant. Mrs Currie is now in Estonia and her office would not comment.

### Elderly leader

AFTER his blazing-eyed confrontation with Deng Xiaoping's old mucker, Sir Edward Heath, 80, on Newsnight earlier this week, Martin Lee, leader of Hong Kong's Democrats, was leaving the BBC when he was called back by a scampering researcher. "Mr Lee,

Mr Lee," she gasped, "Teresa Gorman is on the telephone and would like a word."

Lee, a decent, reasonable man driven to rage by Heath's rude dismissal of his efforts to preserve democracy in Hong Kong, went back in to take the call. Having introduced herself and congratulated him on his performance against Heath, she said: "You dealt with Deng for years; we've had to deal with Sir Edward for more than 20." Lee quite sympathised.

● The saintly cookery writer Delia Smith, who was recently appointed



"Look at it this way, we've missed 18 years under the Tories"

a director of Norwich City Football Club, has her work cut out at the club ground where she has hopes of opening a brasserie. A national survey in Total Football magazine rated the meat pies on sale at Norwich the worst of any football ground in England.

### Gay pride

YET MORE discomfort for the Conservative Party with news that the lion starring in their latest round of advertising has been behaving over-fondly with a male lion friend.

For two days each week, the lion is locked in a cage with his thum and together they frolic, tease and gambol in a manner that reminds onlookers of Christopher Isherwood in prewar Berlin.

At Conservative Central Office, which is locked in battle with the Labour leader said, "That jumper that she wore, look, I bought that jumper. Greater love hath no woman than to give up her fashion taste for her husband. I still like it and that's as defiant as I'm going to get. And it did not cost £300."

### Needed

TONY BLAIR branched into fashion at the What the Papers Say Awards in London yesterday, de-



Cherie Booth: woolly

fending the sweater that his wife was photographed wearing recently when off-duty at the weekend. Cherie Booth had been snapped leaving a supermarket in a thick woolly jumper far removed from her usual wear.

"My wife has appeared in the newspapers over the last few days," the Labour leader said. "That jumper that she wore, look, I bought that jumper. Greater love hath no woman than to give up her fashion taste for her husband. I still like it and that's as defiant as I'm going to get. And it did not cost £300."



Thompson and (inset) Steadman: courtroom buddies



## GUIDE IN PERPLEXITY

A rabbi's brief history of our time

Rabbi means "my master" or "teacher of the law". Where other faiths have priests or pastors, Judaism has rabbis. Hence many of the most influential teachers in history have been Jewish, from Moses and Jesus to Marx and Freud. Great crises often produce great teachers. In the late 12th century, a period of bewildering political and intellectual change in Europe, Rabbi Maimonides wrote his *Guide for the Perplexed*, combining the best of Jewish and gentile thought. As our own catastrophic century ends, many people in the Western democracies find themselves in a different but no less profound perplexity. Many would welcome guidance in our political and moral crisis, though religious leaders are nowadays rarely as persuasive as such a guide needs to be. In Dr Jonathan Sacks we may have found one.

The Chief Rabbi's wise learning, didactic gifts and personal charisma are attested by his previous appearances on the secular stage, such as his 1990 Reith Lectures. *The Times* has championed his forthright views on the role of religion, and has also supported his courageous but controversial attendance this week at a memorial meeting for the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn.

Now Dr Sacks has written a remarkable book, addressed to Jews and non-Jews alike, drawing on the best of contemporary secular thought. The first of three extracts appears in *The Times* today. The *Politics of Hope* would be remarkable simply as a compendium of scholarship; it is, indeed, a brief history of our time. But it is more. The Chief Rabbi crisply analyses the malaise already identified by Frances Lawrence and others, and offers his own solution.

The problem as he sees it is the progressive demoralisation of liberal society since the Enlightenment, and especially over the past half-century. The rise of the welfare state and its dependency culture, of the permissive society and libertarian individualism, have in Dr Sacks's view extended throughout society an atomistic view of human nature which was until recently confined to an educated elite. This libertarian revolution involved the sacrifice of an older,

less selfish and materialistic view of the good life, according to which man is a social animal, rooted in the polis. It also meant the carving up of the public sphere, and the privatisation of morality.

The solution follows naturally: demoralisation must be met by remoralisation. That, of course, is easier said than done; Dr Sacks is not so naive as to suppose that appeals for moral regeneration will readily reduce the crime statistics, or that sermons which have failed to fill the churches and synagogues will somehow galvanise a cynical secular society. But he believes passionately that a moral transformation which has happened before can happen again: just as it did thousands of years ago in the Holy Land, and just as it did in Victorian Britain. In each case the secret resource was the same: the Judeo-Christian tradition encodes a strategy for moral recovery.

What Dr Sacks means by "the politics of hope" is a prophetic, not an apocalyptic or despairing, view of society. That means faith in the moral basis of humanity. After Dunblane, Dr Sacks says that he, like countless others, experienced a moment of national self-awareness. "Morality," he writes, "is civilisation's greatest attempt to humanise fate."

This rich and eloquent book is vulnerable to selective quotation. It will be plundered on the left, for whom his diagnosis of contemporary ills is more useful than his austere "politics of responsibility". On the right, his message may be oversimplified into a crude authoritarianism. His espousal of American communitarianism will not appeal to all, though he imposes his own distinctive rigour on an often woolly-minded movement. His erudition sometimes leads him to cite with enthusiasm thinkers whose ideologies he does not share: thus he quotes approvingly from John Macmurray, Tony Blair's mentor, though he has little in common with the Scottish philosopher's ethical socialism. But such eclecticism is a strength, not a weakness, in a book which deserves to become a key text, not only during the election campaign, but long after.

## TOO LONG TO LANGUISH

The Bridgewater Four were scandalously treated

It has taken 18 years for the men convicted of murdering Carl Bridgewater to prove their innocence. One of the four, Patrick Molloy, died in jail, disputing his conviction to the last. He has been deprived of the joy that the other three felt yesterday as they were released by the Court of Appeal to breathe London air for the first time since James Callaghan was Prime Minister.

There can be few greater crimes that the State can commit than depriving innocent people of their liberty. These men have spent what should have been the best years of their lives in jail. Though no sum of money could ever wipe out the trauma that they have suffered, they should nonetheless be handsomely compensated.

But while Michael and Vincent Hickey and James Robinson readjust to the world of computers, video recorders, out-of-town supermarkets and Tory governments, the Home Office should be examining how this wrongful conviction could have been allowed to stand for so long. It should also try to ensure that the policemen who secured the conviction are themselves brought to justice.

For the evidence which eventually led to the men's release showed tampering on a criminal scale. Mr Molloy always claimed that he had been tricked and intimidated into signing a false confession. He was shown a confession that one of the other co-accused, Vincent Hickey, had allegedly signed. The new evidence produced to the Court of Appeal showed that the Hickey "confession" had been forged by policemen from the No 4 Regional Crime Squad.

The evidence arose out of an "Esda" test on Mr Molloy's confession, which revealed the imprint of the forged signature written on the page above. Since Mr Hickey was several miles away in another police station, being questioned by different detectives, the confession could not have been genuine. Mr Molloy's claim that he had been shown this forged confession was never believed in the many reviews of the case since 1978.

Tragically, the Hickey signature was discovered in 1990, but until two weeks ago nobody realised its significance. Great credit should go to Jim Nichol, solicitor to the men, who decided to go back over all the evidence in preparation for their latest appeal. Mr Molloy's confession was always crucial to the case against all three men since there was no forensic evidence linking them to the scene, no murder weapon and no witnesses.

The West Midlands Serious Crime Squad, which included the detective who falsified Mr Hickey's signature, was wound up in 1989 after evidence came to light of other fabricated confessions and planted evidence in 23 cases during the 1980s. There is much less chance of such behaviour happening today, with the safeguards introduced by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. And although police forces still feel under pressure to secure convictions, particularly in child murders, the police culture is gradually changing. But the Government owes it to these three men — and to the memory of the fourth — to inquire into the circumstances of this miscarriage of justice. It must never be allowed to happen again.

## LOVE, FIDEL

Castro reveals a cuddly side in letters to his mistress

Six love letters, previously unpublished, have just surfaced in Spain. Written by Fidel Castro over four decades ago to Natty Reuvelta, his mistress, they are not the greatest examples of the epistolary art. Self-conscious, didactic and much too long, they are uncomfortably like his rambling speeches to the captive and the faithful.

As our Madrid correspondent writes today, some lines in the letters reveal Señor Castro in his true colours. "I believe that love also has its dialectic: thesis, antithesis and synthesis — just like a Revolution, which would not exist without a Counter-revolution." Now that is the man we know so well, the inflexible ideologue with whom Cuba has had to put up for nearly 40 years.

But wait: that is not the whole picture. The letters occasionally reveal an awkward and touching tenderness. Señor Castro was capable of penning some quite cuddly stuff. Consider these lines, in another letter to Natty: "What does 'me too' mean at the end of your letters? Ah! I know... Do you really love me? Swear to me! Even more than I do you?" Elsewhere, impressively amorous, he promises to crush her in his arms "like a power", and to hold her "sacred, in the intimate recesses of the heart".

Letters to lovers and spouses written by the famous often provide clues to their personalities which one would struggle to find elsewhere. The revelations are not always flattering. Albert Einstein's letters to

his wife, for example, show him to have been a cold-blooded male chauvinist who loved her less than his equations.

Bertrand Russell, too, is ill-served by his letters. Writing to Ottoline Morrell, he shows that his eloquence could desert him when he moved from philosophy to passion: "Loving you is like loving a red-hot poker, which is a worse bedfellow than even Lytton's Umbrella; every caress brings on agony." And only this week, serious posthumous damage was done to the feminist reputation of Simone de Beauvoir when old letters to an American lover revealed that she referred to herself as "an obedient Arab wife" and a "little loving frog".

It is refreshing, however, when love letters of the famous betray the baser instincts. No one can read this line from Flaubert's letters to Louise Colet — with its stylish mixture of irony and lust — and not warm to the man who gave us *Madame Bovary*: "Yes, for me you are a diversion, but one of the best. The most complete kind. You relieve me emotionally, for the thought of you fills me with tenderness and my heart reposes on that thought just as when I lie on you." Flaubert's efforts were better than Señor Castro's, naturally, but the latter's letters have their own potent romance. The real pity, of course, is that the young Cuban writer of love letters grew into a long-winded old Communist tyrant. It must have been that damned dialectic.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

## Demand by life insurers for evidence of genetic tests

From the Chair of the Huntington's Disease Association

Sir, I very rarely find myself hating for the insurance industry but I do feel that your report of February 19, "Life insurers demand gene test results", may unnecessarily alarm those affected by inherited conditions.

When applying for life insurance, disclosure of a genetic test result has always been a requirement. Failure to disclose a genetic test result could result in a policy being declared void. People attending genetic clinics for pre-test counselling are advised to examine their insurance requirements before taking a test.

In the case of Huntington's disease it is usually possible to obtain insurance if you are "at risk" as indicated by your family history, albeit with loaded premiums (averaging 50 per cent). However, hitherto, if you had received a positive test result, indicating that at some future time you would develop Huntington's disease, your chances of obtaining life insurance would have been negligible.

The policy statement by the Association of British Insurers changes this situation in limited circumstances — i.e. people applying for life insurance for a sum of up to £100,000 linked to a new mortgage will still be required to reveal the result of any genetic test; but, if the test is positive and would therefore normally have been to the detriment of the applicant, the result will be disregarded. Family history will continue to be taken into account. In effect this is an improvement for people in this situation.

Meanwhile, as an association, we shall continue to advise our members to seek independent advice with regard to insurance requirements before embarking on a genetic test. It is important for people to apply to companies that look more favourably on those at risk of an inherited condition and to avoid being refused insurance.

Yours sincerely,  
SUE WATKIN, Chair,  
Huntington's Disease Association,  
108 Battersea High Street, SW11,  
February 19.

From Professor David de Bono

Sir, When I was first introduced to medical aspects of insurance some 20 years ago, I inquired why smokers were charged much the same premiums as non-smokers. I understood that the insurance companies were well aware that smokers constituted a higher risk group, but the proportion of smokers among those seeking insurance was so high that companies discriminating against them would lose business. If and when the proportion of smokers diminished, discriminating rates would be introduced.

This has indeed come about. I suspect that the reverse situation will eventually apply to those undergoing genetic testing: as and when it becomes commonplace it will cease to identify a high risk population, and market forces will drive insurers to accept reasonable risks at appropriate premiums. In the meantime, what worries doctors and patients is that many insurance companies seem to regard genetic testing as providing a categorical (yes/no) answer rather than simply contributing, along with clinical and actuarial data, to an accurate quantification of risk.

The price to be paid for compulsory disclosure of genetic information may need to be the adoption of a voluntary or statutory code of practice on its use. This is important if further advances in medical research and patient care are not to be seriously handicapped.

Yours sincerely,  
DAVID DE BONO,  
University of Leicester,  
Department of Cardiology,  
Glennfield General Hospital,  
Leicester LE3 9QP.

From Mr K. D. Boyd

Sir, The benefits of ever-advancing knowledge in genetic make-up outweigh the harm. The more we know, the better the prospect for mankind.

I suspect that when the shouting has died down the practice of excluding or loading the insurance of impaired lives will be as difficult with the new knowledge as it was before. There are a number of sufferers from

life-threatening conditions who can obtain cover today, provided they can prove they have come to terms with their defects and have the discipline to live with them.

Would anyone insure with a company known to ignore relevant information? Such behaviour involves paying claims that foresight could have excluded, thus reducing the benefits to other shareholders or policyholders. An underclass of the uninsurable already exists. Would not a dramatic increase in this underclass tempt an ingenious insurer to enter this market? That is what has always happened in the past.

Yours faithfully,  
KENNETH BOYD,  
Boyd & Associates  
(Independent financial advisers),  
The Oast House,  
Holt Pound, Farnham, Surrey,  
February 19.

From Mr Panos C. Mavron

Sir, The insistence of insurers on knowing the results of voluntary DNA tests raises serious issues that must be addressed by the next government. Being health-conscious I volunteered for an ECT test several years ago, even though I was, and remain, perfectly healthy. The test showed that I had a slightly abnormal heart rhythm. As a result insurance companies refused to insure me.

My GP said there was nothing to worry about as not everybody has the same heart rhythm, and later examination by two consultant cardiologists, which included a full workout on a treadmill, confirmed that I am healthier than most and that, so long as I continue with my healthy lifestyle and remain fit, I should live a normal lifespan. I have thus been punished for showing an interest in my health.

Yours faithfully,  
PANOS C. MAVRON,  
71 Linden Way, Southgate, N14,  
February 19.

Weekend Money letters, page 43

## Anti-Semitism in Shakespeare's eyes

From Mr Peter Bassano

Sir, Jeremy Kingston (review of *The Merchant of Venice*, February 14) describes the play as "Jew-hating, Jew-baiting, Jew-spitting". There is nothing new in this perception of Shakespeare's anti-Semitic portrait of Shylock. *The Merchant* has been banned from schools and theatres in several countries because of this perception.

Jews were officially proscribed in Elizabethan England, but that didn't mean Shakespeare never met one: despite the exclusion law there were several at court, including the Lupo and Bassano families of royal musicians, and Rodrigo Lopez, Portuguese physician to the Queen, who are identified as having Jewish backgrounds.

In 1594 Dr Lopez was charged with trying to poison the Queen. He was tortured, confessed, found guilty, and executed. This episode sparked off xenophobic fervour in which Marlowe's truly anti-Semitic play, *The Jew of Malta*, was revived to public acclaim. Some may think that the Lopez affair caused Shakespeare to start work on *The Merchant*.

In 1973 Dr A. L. Rowse, working from the diaries of the Elizabethan astrologer Simon Forman, identified Emilia Bassano, daughter of Baptist Bassano, one of the Queen's Venetian Jewish musicians — from whose uncle, Antonio, I claim descent — as the Dark Lady of the sonnets (details, January 29, 1973). In recent years a number of scholars have presented literary and historical arguments to support Dr Rowse's identification.

Given the inconsistency of Elizabethan spelling, Bassano would have been recognised by a contemporary audience as Jewish. How can Shakespeare have created in Shylock an anti-Jewish stereotype, since Bassano, his antagonist, was Jewish too?

Yours etc,  
PETER BASSANO  
(Head of Brass Faculty,  
Royal College of Music),  
Stonewell Farm,  
Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire,  
February 17.

## Christians in Pakistan

From the Imam of the London Mosque

Sir, The recent persecution of Christians by the so-called followers of Islam in Pakistan (report, "Pakistan Muslims force Christians to abandon homes", February 13) is deplorable and yet another example of the repeated violation of human rights in Pakistan. All that it achieves is a bad name for Islam.

Followers of Islam, or for that matter any religion, should not violate the peaceful teachings of their faith and tarnish its image in the eyes of others. No religion permits this. The real culprit are those who ignore and violate the teachings of their religion and desecrate it.

Yours sincerely,  
A. M. RASHED,  
Imam, The London Mosque,  
16 Gressendall Road, SW18,  
February 15.

## Church clappies

From the Reverend Richard Warden

Sir, Despite the breathtaking beauty of Cranmer, it seems fanciful to suggest that a return to the Book of Common Prayer will in itself encourage the church to encourage its young people, to attend the church of today (letters, February 13). The problem of falling numbers at worship must be addressed at a deeper level.

Given the legislative onslaught on the traditional Sunday in recent years and the subsequent change in behaviour patterns in our society, is it any surprise that people attend church less often?

Yours sincerely,  
RICHARD WARDEN (Chaplain),  
Wycombe Abbey School,  
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire,  
February 13.

## End of the line?

From Mr Roger Hand

Sir, On the basis that every scheduled train actually must make a pair of journeys — out and back — does the odd number of journeys (39) that South West Trains proposes to cancel each day (report, February 18) mean that, sooner or later, all its trains will end up in Poole or some other extremity of its network?

Yours etc,  
ROGER HAND,  
Cottage 4, Kintbury Mill,  
Kintbury, Berkshire,  
February 18.

## Stops and starts

From Mr Tom Courtenay

Sir, When trains near their destination nowadays, a strangled voice often announces: "We are now approaching so and so, where this train will terminate." No it won't. Surely in the majority of cases it will go on to have many more happy journeys.

Yours sincerely,  
TOM COURTENAY,  
c/o Wyndham's Theatre,  
Charing Cross Road, WC2,  
February 20.

## EU brinkmanship

From Mr Walter Cairns

Sir, Christopher Jackson, MEP, is wrong to assert (letter, February 19) that the recent vote in the House of Lords on the relationship with the EU amounted in effect to a decision to leave the European Union. The Upper Chamber merely voted to reassert the preference of UK law over EU law by making certain changes to the 1972 European Communities Act. That does not amount to EU withdrawal.

In 1965, the French Government refused to take up its seat at the Council of Ministers. In effect this amounted to issuing the Community authorities with an ultimatum: either you accept our terms or you exit. This tactic proved successful, as it resulted in the 1966 Luxembourg Agreement, which enshrined the national veto.

The EU would be faced with the same dilemma towards Britain if the House of Lords' resolution was translated into legislation. My guess is that, since expulsion of a member state is a political impossibility, the EU would have to submit to the British Parliament's wishes. This would at least ensure that the wishes of an elected body took precedence over those of unelected bureaucrats.

Yours sincerely,  
WALTER CAIRNS,  
Broomhurst Hall,  
836 Wilmslow Road, Manchester,  
February 19.

From Mr Antony Snow

Sir, It does not seem to have occurred to the EU Economic and Social Committee that the reason for "the generally negative stance towards Europe adopted by members of the two major political parties in the run-up to the election" is that they will get more votes that way.

The British electorate has over the years shown an unerring sense of what is good for it. Only those writing from the sanctuary of Brussels would believe that they know better.

Yours faithfully,  
ANTONY SNOW,  
16 Rumbold Road, SW6.

## Labour fisheries policy

From the Shadow Minister of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs

Sir, Contrary to your report, "Fishermen accuse Labour of breaking quota-hopping pledge" (February 19), there has been no change in Labour's position on quota-hopping. Our determination to see this matter resolved remains unaltered. Labour has not ruled out refusing to agree conclusions of the EU's intergovernmental conference if such conclusions do not address the problem of quota-hopping.

Quota-hopping will be a priority negotiating objective of a Labour government at the IGC.

Yours faithfully,  
GAVIN STRANG,  
House of Commons,  
February 11.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

## Decline of the Unions?

From the President of the Cambridge Union

Sir, The fact that Oxford has problems attracting students to serious debates ("The declining state of the Union", Michael Gove, February 14) will surprise no one at Cambridge.

The Prime Minister must take his share of the blame after his attack during yesterday's Question Time, accusing Mr Blair of "pathetic political point-scoring, barely worthy of a student debating society". As almost every Cabinet heavyweight is Union-sprung, and few if any of Labour's are, he should perhaps choose his insults more carefully.

We recently invited the Prime Minister to attend a debate here, to remind him that decorum is born at Oxbridge and lost at Westminster, but he declined.

Yours faithfully,  
ANDREW LEEK, President,  
The Cambridge Union Society,  
9a Bridge Street, Cambridge,  
February 14.

From Mr Matthew J. Howard

Sir, Michael Gove argues today that the Oxford Union is now displaying a

## News output on BBC

From the Chief Executive of BBC News

Sir, The reporting of our plans to review our news output led to a speculative piece about the *Today* programme in your pages ("Why we must save the Gang on Four", Media and Marketing, February 19).

Perhaps I can clarify our intentions. We haven't reviewed our output comprehensively for ten years and I believe it's time for us to look in detail at the ways in which audiences are viewing and listening to BBC News. Our programme-makers will also be a part of this process. As it happens we are in a strong position. The *Today*

programme, for example, has more listeners than any other radio news programme.

Your article claims that "conclusions have been reached and leaked before the process has begun". These are not the conclusions of the review team, which has not yet met.

The review team may recommend changes; it may not. What is not in doubt is our responsibility to serve all audiences with programmes which maintain the journalistic values of impartiality, accuracy and integrity.

Yours faithfully,  
TONY HALL,  
Chief Executive, BBC News,  
Television Centre, Wood Lane, W12,  
February 20.

## Surname usage

From Professor Gerald Dix

Sir, Old name habits undoubtedly die hard. Within the past decade or so it has been my experience to find a highly formalised system operating within a university. The registrar, being of equivalent status to a professor, always addressed lecturers and readers as Mr or Dr but, as they were his equal, professors were addressed by surname alone. A (very) few of the more senior professors, such as deans or pro-vice-chancellors, with whom he worked closely, were addressed by their first names in some of the less formal meetings.

And I have a typed letter from Dr Arnold Toynbee, written in 1969, beginning "Dear Mr Dix" and ending "Yours very sincerely", with a manuscript addition below his signature saying: "Delete the 'Mr'. It looks terribly formal. A.J.T.". We were terribly and colleagues, but with an age difference of almost forty years, so I continued to address him as Dr Toynbee.

Yours faithfully,  
GERALD DIX,  
13 Friars Quay, Norwich.

## Battered brides

From Dr Trevor G. Stammers

Sir, It is not only in the Church of Scotland that clergy beat their wives and scripture is used to justify the violence (report, February 10). In researching my recent book, *Love Lies Bleeding*, I found evidence of domestic brutality in many churches right across the denominations. One woman I interviewed was regularly beaten for 15 years by her husband, a deacon in an independent evangelical church.

Church leaders counselling women to stay in such situations would do well to remember that it is the violence that separates "those whom God has joined together", not the wife who flees to escape it.

Those who too glibly quote "I hate divorce" (the first words of Malachi 2, 16) rarely know that the verse (in the New International Version) continues "and I hate a man's covering himself (or his wife) with violence".

Yours faithfully,  
TREVOR STAMMERS,  
25 Beaford Grove,  
Merton Park, SW20,  
February 10.







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GLENLIVET  
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22 1997

# High Court finds for Hoechst to settle battle over patent BP faces \$100m damages bill

BY FRASER NELSON

BRITISH PETROLEUM is facing damages of more than \$100 million after the High Court found that it had infringed a patent belonging to Hoechst, the German chemicals group.

The oil company is understood to be heading for the heaviest patent damages claim in British legal history. It was found to have been using a filter patented by Hoechst Celanese for six years, and could now be forced to hand over every penny of profit that it made.

BP, the world's largest producer of acetic acid, said

yesterday that while it was phasing out all use of the patented filter, it was still appealing against the decision. It added that the ruling would not affect either of its two acid production plants in Hull.

A spokeswoman for BP said: "This is a historical matter. BP Chemicals was using the filters to just a tiny proportion of our acetate production streams many years ago. We have almost completely phased it out."

However, the patented filter is still being used in one of its two acetic acid plants, and is unlikely to be phased out until April. It has been ordered to

pay Hoechst compensation for the full period until the filter is completely out of use.

The argument centres on a filter which purifies acetic acid by removing certain iodides, allowing the cheaper and faster production of vinyl acetate from acetic acids.

Hoechst argues that if BP had not used the filter, which it calls a "guard bed", the company might not have been able to carve such a command of the market.

BP is playing down the importance of the filter, and says it would be disappointed if it had to pay its rival as much as \$25 million in compensation. The company

hopes to limit its damages by arguing that the guard bed was employed as an extra in the production line.

Mr Justice Laddie told BP: "You are going to say that the guard bed is the tail and not the dog, and it will be crucial to your submission that you are right."

He indicated that Hoechst stood to gain more by taking the unusual step of claiming for the profits that BP made from the acid, rather than the well-trodden route of applying for damages.

Industry sources said that if Hoechst did go for the profits, it could stand to gain compensation of up to \$130 million

rather than the \$50 million to \$100 million range expected at present.

As BP sold most of the refined acid to its subsidiaries, Hoechst could claim even more money if the court agreed to evaluate the acid on what BP could have sold it for in the market rather than its in-house rate.

BP has now been instructed to hand over details of how much acid was produced in the two plants over the six years, how much it was sold for and to whom.

This is the second time that BP has lost the case against Hoechst. Three years ago, it appeared in court in America

charged with infringing the patent on the same filter in the same process. It was found liable, and agreed to damages of \$10 million. It also decided to appeal then, but the appeal was rejected.

The two companies will meet in the High Court again next month, when Hoechst will say whether it has decided to opt for the court deciding the amount of damages or to take a risk on the profits. The final damages payout is not expected to come through until the summer.

Hoechst Celanese was represented by Taylor Joynson Garrett, the City solicitors. Bird & Bird represented BP.

## Pearson sells holding in Hong Kong broadcaster

BY ERIC REGULY

PEARSON, the media and entertainment group, dismantled the key component of its Asian strategy yesterday with the sale of its 10 per cent stake in Television Broadcasts, Hong Kong's leading broadcaster, for \$111.1 million.

Pearson acquired the TVB interest only two years ago, paying \$103.6 million. Greg Dyke, head of Pearson Television, said: "Our original plan was to use it to expand our investments in Asia."

TVB and Pearson made only a little progress together. Their biggest accomplishment was creating a satellite TV joint venture in India, called Home TV. The venture will not be affected by Pearson's withdrawal from TVB. Pearson said it would pursue other opportunities in Asia, but did not provide details.

The TVB stake was sold to Shaw Brothers, a cinema and entertainment group in Hong Kong which owns the world's largest library of Chinese

films. Shaw already owned 23.5 per cent of TVB.

Pearson received \$3.5 million in dividends over two years from the TVB investment, but they did not cover the cost of capital. The sale proceeds will help to cut debt.

The TVB sale appears to be part of Pearson's efforts to focus on the group, eliminating peripheral and non-control investments. Majorie Scardino, the new chief executive, is expected to announce a series of disposals over the next few years. Analysts said they could include Pearson's remaining 43 per cent stake in BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster, the half stake in the Lazard investment house and perhaps some newspapers and magazines.

In the longer term, the City believes that Pearson may sell Pearson Television, which includes Thames TV, Select TV, Grampy and FT Television. Mr Dyke would not comment on speculation that he would like to purchase the division in a management buyout. He said he had not discussed the idea with Ms Scardino.

In a separate development, Pearson said it would provide more details about its investigation into Penguin's accounting on March 17, when its annual results are released. Pearson dismissed an employee in Penguin's New Jersey office this month for apparently giving unauthorised discounts to book retailers. Pearson is taking a charge of up to \$100 million to cover what it describes as the improper accounting.



Philippe Bourguignon, chairman and chief executive of Euro Disney who steered the company through its deep financial crisis, is leaving for a post at Club Med. Gilles Pelissier, president and CEO, will take on the role

## Auditor pays ADT £50m to settle dispute

BY GAVIN LUMSDEN

BDO Binder Hamlyn, the former accountancy partnership of Binder Hamlyn, has agreed to end a seven-year battle and pay nearly \$86 million (£50 million) in an out-of-court settlement with ADT, the American electronic security provider.

This is almost half the amount the firm was ordered to pay in damages to ADT by the High Court in December 1995 and thereby removes the threat of \$34 million personal liability faced by 150 former partners.

The firm said the settlement, which consists of a \$77.5 million immediate payment, with \$8.6 million deferred, fell within its insurance cover. It has withdrawn an appeal scheduled for later this year.

John Newton, a Binder Hamlyn spokesman, expressed mixed feelings about the settlement but added: "The costs and uncertainty of the outcome of litigation have influenced us in taking this essentially commercial decision. We firmly believe the original judgment was unsound and we are aware that there was considerable professional interest in following the progress of our appeal hearing. Nevertheless, this settlement removes uncertainty from our partners and draws a line under the financial and time costs of the case."

The dispute centred on the BDO Binder Hamlyn's auditing of Britannia Security Group in 1989, a US firm that ADT bought for \$105 million in 1990. After the acquisition ADT discovered profits had been hugely inflated and that the company's real value was \$40 million. ADT's suit against BDO Binder Hamlyn shocked the accountancy

world as the BDO Binder Hamlyn had used another firm to audit the security services side of the business. ADT's case also relied on a verbal confirmation of Britannia's accounts given by Martin Bishop, a partner in the accountants' New York office.

Gerry Acher, chairman of the audit faculty of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, England and Wales, called on the Government to reform liability laws so that professional advisers will not face disproportionate claims.

BDO Binder Hamlyn subsequently formed a new partnership, which joined Arthur Andersen Worldwide in 1994. The existing partnership is now Binder Hamlyn.

## BUSINESS TODAY

FTSE 100	4338.5	(-19.3)
FTSE All Share	2115.43	(-7.3)
Nikkei	19034.54	(-17.17)
New York	6912.76	(-16.82)
Dow Jones	801.67	(-1.13)

3-month Interbank	9.25%	(9.25%)
1-year long gilt	7.13%	(1.13%)

London	1.6185	(1.6125)
DM	1.6182	(1.6114)
DM	2.7252	(2.7228)
DM	3.2025	(3.1998)
DM	2.5738	(2.5681)
DM	198.84	(198.52)
DM	97.2	(97.2)

London	1.6130	(1.6083)
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## Shield soars despite statement

BY JEREMY LAURANCE  
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

SHARES in Shield Diagnostics leapt another £1.10 to £5.26 yesterday in spite of publication of a carefully worded statement intended to damp down speculation.

Shield, whose shares were 150p at the start of the month, is working on a test that could replace cholesterol screening. The statement included a letter from George Miller of the Medical Research Council Wolfson Centre of Preventive Medicine in London who is co-ordinating a trial of 15 different markers of heart disease.

One of these is APT, made by Shield, which was shown in a pilot study to hold some promise and this appeared to be confirmed by a preliminary analysis of results.

## Rabbatts resigns from Centrica

BY ERIC REGULY

HEATHER RABBATTS, believed to be Britain's best paid town hall chief, yesterday resigned as non-executive director of Centrica, which demerged from British Gas earlier this week.

Ms Rabbatts, £115,000-a-year chief executive of Lambeth council, said: "It was a matter of personal regret that she had submitted her resignation."

Pressure from Tory and Liberal Democrat councillors, who said she should devote all of her time to fixing Lambeth's affairs, was behind her decision to resign. The Lambeth position she took two years ago is known as "the worst job in local government." Ms Rabbatts, 41, a former barrister, argued that

joining the Centrica board would not affect her commitment to Lambeth. In an effort to gain support, she even offered to donate her £20,000 a year Centrica salary to the mayor's charity.

Roy Gardner, Centrica's chief executive, recruited Ms Rabbatts to help repair Centrica's reputation for shoddy service. She was approached by Centrica in December and would have attended her first board meeting this week. Mr Gardner said: "I am very sorry that Ms Rabbatts has had to resign her post."

Her departure leaves Patricia Mann, a vice-president of J Walter Thompson, the advertising agency, as the only female director of Centrica.

## NatWest seeks £10m from Tesco

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY

NATWEST is believed to be seeking up to £10 million compensation from Tesco after the supermarket group ditched a five-year contract with the bank and signed a new deal with Royal Bank of Scotland.

Last week Tesco said it was linking with RBS to provide financial services. NatWest had provided Tesco's Clubcard Plus debit card since last June.

Lord MacLaurin of Knebworth, Tesco chairman, resigned from the board of NatWest after the new deal with RBS was confirmed. David Malpas retired as managing director of Tesco yesterday after nearly 30 years with the company. He is succeeded by Terry Leahy, who becomes chief executive.

## Bank of Ireland Mortgages



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## A WORKING WEEK FOR: RICHARD GOODING

## Airport chief takes off in the land of dragons

Jon Ashworth finds out how a white elephant came to fly and how an underground link is expected to help it to soar

Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday

LONDON City airport is heading for smoother skies. New ownership has brought a touch of calm to this bleak outpost in London's Docklands. More than a million passengers will pass through its gates this year, and the best is yet to come. The opening of the Jubilee Line extension will, it is claimed, place London City just 18 minutes' ride from Westminster.

All this provides the perfect cue for Richard Gooding, who joined as managing director in August with a brief to steer London City through its new phase. He is set to embark on a programme of refurbishment that will transform the entire package. The terminal building and lounges will be spruced up and the car park re-surfaced. There are plans to link the terminal with a 200-bed, four-star hotel, allowing businessmen to check out and board their flights with a minimum of fuss.

The changes bear the mark of Dermot Desmond, a Dublin businessman who is fast building a diverse portfolio of investments. His interests include Celtic Football Club, aircraft leasing, property and hotels. He purchased Sandy Lane in Barbados for £38 million last year. Desmond paid £23.5 million for London City in October 1995, ending a disastrous run for John Mowlem, the construction group that built the airport.

London City opened in 1987, just before the collapse in property values that was to push Canary Wharf over the brink. Mowlem could only watch in horror as millions of pounds seeped away into the Docklands marshes. The link extended to airlines such as City Link, which pulled out in 1991 after running up a reported £10 million in costs. Another carrier, Brynmor, withdrew in 1993, and Conti-Flug went one better — it went bust.

The turning point came in early 1992, when London City's runway was extended to accommodate aircraft such as the BAe 146 "whisper jet", which has a range of 1,000 miles, bringing most leading European destinations within reach. By the end of the year, passenger numbers had risen from a low of 150,000 to about 185,000. The opening of the Limehouse Link significantly improved access to the City and central London.

Desmond, who passes through London City at least once a week, has brought the financial stability that the airport needs. Gooding says: "He's not an asset stripper. He's not that sort of investor at all. He is interested in businesses where he can come in at a good value-for-money price, and grow and enhance those businesses so that they become more valuable."

Desmond has timed his entry well. The airport will soon have a raft of new neighbours; among them Norton Healthcare, a US company that is building its European regional headquarters on the far side of the runway. A new business park is being launched, and there are plans — as yet unfinalised — to open London's biggest exhibition and conference centre. Wimpey Homes is building 777 homes around the Royal Docks. Deloitte & Touche is assessing the feasibility of building a £90 million national aquarium.

Such developments can only spur pas-

senger numbers, which hit 727,601 in 1996 and should comfortably exceed a million this year. Problems of access have been the main obstacle in the past — highlighted by controversial claims that the airport was only 20 minutes by car from the West End. After complaints the boast was amended to "less than 30 minutes".

Many continue to view Docklands as an impenetrable wasteland. As Gooding says: "A lot of people in London think that east of Tower Bridge it says 'There Be Dragons' on the map. It's seen as a lot of derelict warehouses, lots of narrow cobbled streets, and the legacy of some of the more famous criminals that operated in the area."

The opening of the Jubilee Line extension, scheduled for March 1998, is expected to make all the difference. Gooding says: "Westminster will be 18 minutes away. You'll be able to travel door-to-door between here and the Ritz in under 30 minutes. Suddenly, we're going to be nearer than any other airport." Shuttle buses will cover the half mile between the airport and Canning Town station.

Gooding is well suited to this type of project. He joined from London Luton airport, which was turned round under his stewardship. In his five years there, Luton branched out from cheap holiday charter flights to include budget European services, using airlines such as Debonair. The airport grew into a

popular port of call for executive jets, attracted by the ability to fly in at any time of day or night.

Gooding is now training his sights on a more elusive quarry — the upmarket, time-conscious, business traveller. The intention is to increase the number of destinations — currently 20, served by 13 airlines — to take in all the leading business centres in Europe. Places such as Amsterdam, Bern, Frankfurt, Dublin, Stockholm and Milan currently fall within the net, served by carriers such as Air UK and CityJet. Those still to be added include Copenhagen, Hamburg, Madrid and Barcelona. UK destinations yet to be served include Glasgow, Manchester and Belfast.

London City is becoming a viable alternative to Heathrow for executives within the appropriate catchment area. Those who live in central London, and around the eastern side of the M25, will find it appropriate to their needs. It certainly has the edge on Heathrow in swiftness of service. Passengers can turn up ten minutes before departure, and speed on their way, fog and other natural hazards permitting. As Gooding says: "At Heathrow, you can walk for 20 minutes before you've even got into the main terminal, never mind the traumas of parking."

"Heathrow is a super airport, because it

6 In some ways, that congestion factor at Heathrow is our biggest strength

has such a choice of flights and such high frequencies. All the airlines in the world want to be there, and it's natural that passengers will want to be where most of the well-known airlines are. But I think it is getting too like. In some ways, that congestion factor at Heathrow is our biggest strength."

In many ways, Gooding's goals are not particularly ambitious. London City deals with 20,000 passengers a week; doubling the numbers would threaten congestion and delays — all the things it is seeking to avoid. Only about 15 per cent of air travellers in London and the South East fall into the premium traveller bracket. Gooding will be happy to capture about 1½ per cent of that. As he says: "The aviation business isn't just about volume of passengers. It's about yield: how much can you earn from each of these passengers?"

The refurbishment is an important part of the equation. "Much of people's perceptions of the business are of what it looks like. Is it clean and tidy? Does it look bright and polished? Or is it starting to look slightly tarnished? These make a real impression on people." The terminal and lounges are a prime focus. "The airport building is now ten years old. You're starting to see the cracks."

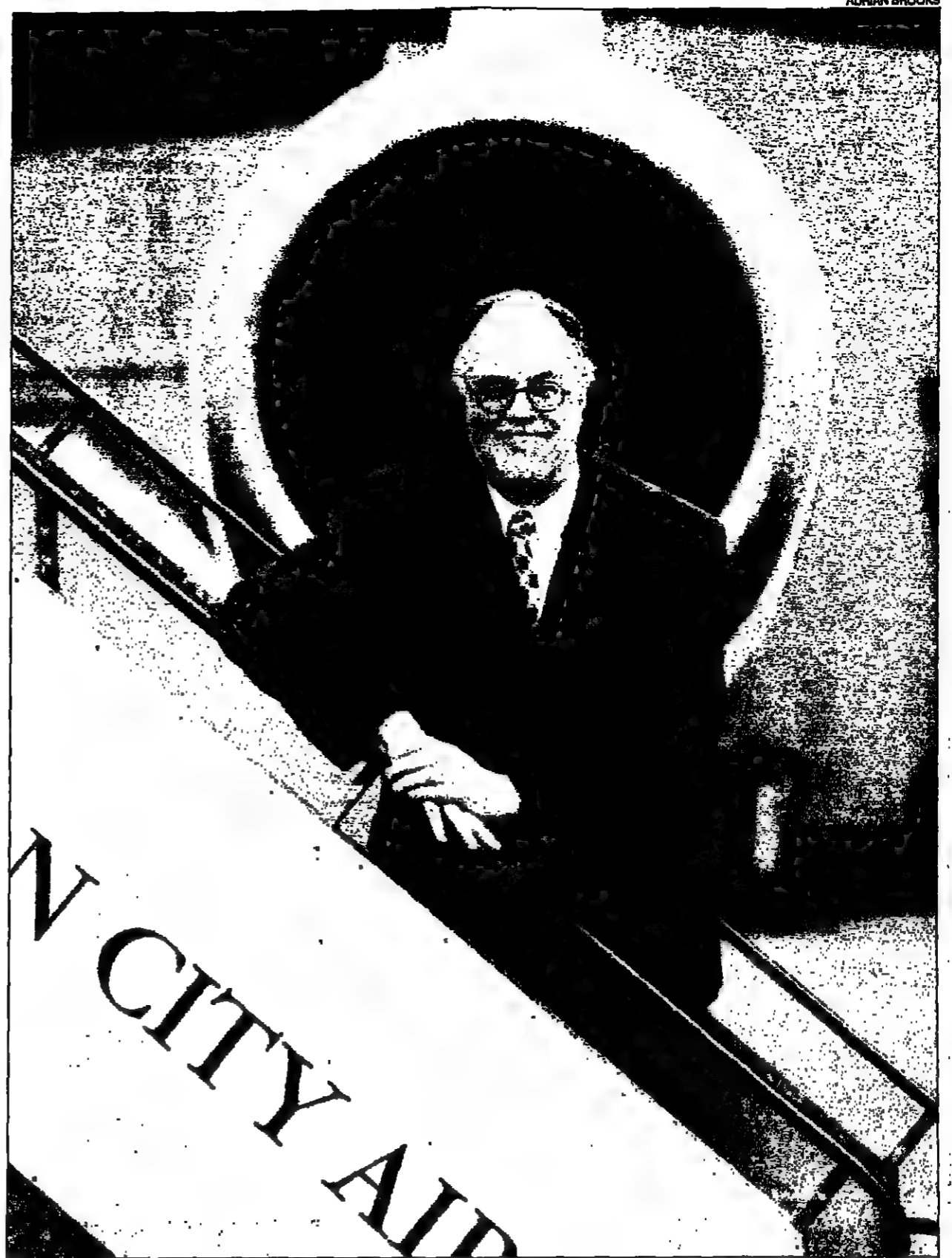
Gooding is keen to smarten up the airport car park, putting in a covered walkway and improving security. Most of the interest is likely to centre on the hotel scheme — a rare enough spectacle in amenity-starved Docklands. He foresees a complex that will blend in with the terminal and straddle the airport drop-off zone. "A lot of people like to use the facilities of a hotel, if even for a few hours. You could check out of the hotel and check in for your flight all in the same transaction. You just walk through and get on to the aeroplane."

Having Desmond on the scene has helped to make such initiatives possible. "While we're not hugely profitable, we're no longer losing the disgusting sums of money that were being lost in earlier years. We can start to turn our eyes to the sort of issues which would have been seen as bit more frivolous in years before."

The promise of increased jobs can only go down well in a borough with higher than average unemployment. London City provides work for 600 people, subcontractors and other staff included. "Ten years ago, here in the Royal Docks, not one of those jobs existed. There's never been a penny of public money in the airport, yet from nothing, 600 well-paid permanent jobs have been created. In terms of economic regeneration, it's something we have to be proud of."

"While we need highly skilled jobs at one end of the spectrum, we also want cooks, and gardeners, and waiters, and waitresses, and retail people, and baggage handlers and firemen. The whole panoply of what used to be called working-class jobs. That's what airports are good at providing."

It all bodes well. "Having gone from a small, quiet, backwater airport which was seen by many as a white elephant, the original rationale behind developing an inner-city airport in London's Docklands has come to fruition. We're now being seen by the experienced business traveller as a genuine alternative to Heathrow for short-haul flights to and from Europe."



Richard Gooding says London City airport is not yet hugely profitable, but it is no longer losing "disgusting sums"

MARTIN CURRIE

## A dram of comfort in an exotic environment

Joanna Pitman discovers the Victorian garden at the Glen Grant distillery

Beside the clear waters of the Back Burn, and carefully hidden in a leafy corner, is a turf-roofed Dram Hut and whisky safe. The Victorian garden attached to the Glen Grant distillery at Rothes on Spey, Aberlour, has just been restored from bedraggled wilderness to idealised Scottish Highland landscape by its owners, the Chivas and Glenlivet Group.

The garden was designed by Major James Grant when he inherited the Glen Grant Pure Malt Scotch Whisky business in 1872. Its restoration has been shortlisted for this year's Civic Trust Landscape Award.

And whisky lovers will be tantalised by the reports of a rediscovery of the Dram Hut, Major Grant's private whisky safe that held stocks of the best pure malt. This has been re-equipped and made ready, one imagines, for directors of the group to indulge in a liquid equivalent of the Easter egg hunt. (Hints on its location may be divulged on special request.)

The garden restoration, carried out by a team of specialists led by Karen Ellington and with advice from the Scottish Conservation Projects Trust, has also provided a fascinating picture of Scottish horticultural history.

Major Grant was a pioneering businessman, a renowned sportsman and an intrepid traveller who undertook every project on a grand scale. He chose the 27-acre site taking advantage of the

landscape's natural features and dramatic setting and created rustic bridges across the burn and waterside paths to meander through the orchards and wooded glades.

An army of gardeners cleared the lower reaches of the glen and laid stone and pottery drains. Conservatories were built to house his collection of orchids and hothouse fruits. Special visitors were treated to melons, peaches and grapes before enjoying a glass of Glen

Grant from the safe with cold water from the burn.

In its heyday the garden fully employed 11 gardeners, but after Major Grant's death, it fell into decline. Harsh winters and the storm of 1953 took their toll.

The restorers spent three full seasons bringing the garden back to life with the help of a few photographs from the turn of the century. They traced the original winding pathways, removed fallen timber, seeded trees, rebuilt walls, restored

bridges and repaired ponds and pathways. And as they cleared the encroaching undergrowth, beautiful mature orchards were discovered in which most of the cherry and apple trees had survived.

Banks of rhododendrons and native ferns had also survived as well as specimens of early hybrids. The ornamental areas have been replanted with species from America, China and the Himalayas according to period garden catalogues. And the water features, a passion of Victorian gardeners, have been revived, the lily pond being refilled using the traditional method of clay puddling and the bog garden replanted with iris and lilac on its banks.

Exotic plants from distant parts were highly fashionable in the late 19th century and determined specimen collectors developed special cases to carry back samples.

Major Grant created garden environments to accommodate a wide variety of exotics, including a large rhubarb-like marshland plant from Brazil, samples of Himalayan birch and the Chinese primula.

The restoration of the Glen Grant garden to its idealised Highland landscape has provided an extraordinary living museum of Scotland's late 19th-century gardening heritage. And visitors will no doubt appreciate its year-round glories all the more if they are fortunate enough to discover the hidden Dram



Wilderness tamed: the restored garden of James Grant



## A red rag to a bull market?

The Chinese flag will soon replace the Union Jack in Hong Kong. But what will happen to the economic complexion of the colony? How will companies fare after the change-over? Will investors be seeing red? Martin Currie think not.

After all, Hong Kong companies have been investing in China for many years. And Chinese companies — the 'red chips' — are already listed on the Hong Kong stock exchange.

But whatever happens — in South East Asia or elsewhere in the world — you can be sure that Martin Currie will be applying their long-established international investment skills to full advantage. (So no change there.)

MARTIN CURRIE

For a guide to investing with us, call 0500 61 62 65

INSIGHT ON INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT

Martin Currie Investment Management Ltd, Saltire Court, 20 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2ES. Regulated by IMRO.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

# Glaxo and Zeneca move in opposite directions

THE sight of shares in Glaxo Wellcome and Zeneca, two of Britain's biggest drug manufacturers, travelling in opposite directions set tongues wagging in the Square Mile.

Glaxo Wellcome ended the day 21p lower at £10.12½, on turnover of more than six million shares. At the same time, shares of Zeneca were heading north with a leap of 78p to a new all-time high of £18.95½.

At this level Zeneca carries a price tag of £17.2 billion, but remains more than half the size of Glaxo Wellcome, capitalised at almost £37 billion.

Zeneca has been the subject of intense takeover talk ever since it was demerged from ICI in 1993. Roche, the Swiss pharmaceutical group, was the name on everyone's lips a few weeks ago and in the past it has also been linked with Pfizer in the US.

A bid by Glaxo Wellcome is usually dismissed by brokers on regulatory grounds. Most of them say such a move would be immediately referred, but they also said that when Glaxo bid £10 billion for Wellcome in 1994.

Last night there were whispers about a possible link-up between the two sides. But as one market-maker commented: "These sort of price movements usually attract the attention of the Takeover Panel".

The rest of the equity market had the look of the day after the night before. Indeed, a lot of analysts failed to make it to their desks after the annual Society of Investment Analysts' dinner at the Grosvenor Hotel.

Nevertheless, the FT-SE 100 index was able to halve an earlier fall of almost 44 points prompted by the sharp fall in the Dow Jones average the previous evening. The expiry of the March options passed off without event.

The index closed 19.3 down at 4,336.8, a rise of 5.1 on the week. Turnover reflected the reduced attendance levels, with just 780 million shares traded.

Redland was a late casualty, falling 8p to 338p after losing its place as a constituent of the top 100 companies to Energy Group, which demerged from Hanson on Monday. Trading on the grey market, ahead of the start of official dealings on Monday.



Shares in Railtrack rose 23½p on institutional buying

Energy slipped 1½p to 525p. Hanson was 1½p down at 87½p, while the rumour of the business, made up of building products, was 6p down at 287½p.

BOC Group sported a rise of 3½p to 994p cheered by positive comments from several brokers. NatWest Securities has raised its forecast after further consideration of the

figures. The group is now looking for pre-tax profits of £445 million for the current year against £444.9 million and is urging clients to add to their holdings.

GKN enjoyed a much needed rally with the price firming 12p to 947½p. There are indications that the American judge in the Metekne franchise trial may call the damages awarded by around one third.

The banks were mixed ahead of next week's crunch of figures. The group is now looking for pre-tax profits of £445 million for the current year against £444.9 million and is urging clients to add to their holdings.

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finished the week on a high note with a rise of 17p to a new high of 74½p as investors continued to reflect on prospects for its process for processing BSE in cattle. Some estimate the European market, alone, could be worth £10 million a year.

Institutional investors continued to chase Railtrack to new heights with a rise of 23½p to 446p. Earlier this week the group committed itself to spending £750 million a year on the rail network and promised to reduce the delay in its current £750 million capital expenditure programme.

Chelsea Village, owner of the west London Premiership side, rose 6½p to 161½p in spite of plunging into the red during the first six months. The final result exceeded expectations and was achieved despite crowd capacity being sharply reduced due to construction of a new stand.

Ashurst Technology was 20p better at 80p with the market continuing to assess prospects after its link-up with Easton Sports in the US to make baseball and softball bats.

Hopes that Granada will use the proceeds from the sale of its Wellcome Break chain of service stations to bid for the remainder of Yorkshire Television lifted the latter 42½p to £12.15. Granada already owns 25 per cent of Yorkshire.

First Call rose 2½p to 11p on news it was in talks which could lead to it making a significant acquisition. The announcement was prompted by the rise in the share price.

CI-EDGED: Unimpressed with the revised fourth-quarter gross domestic product, bond prices were dragged lower along with US Treasury bonds.

Investors seemed unwilling to test the market by opening fresh positions ahead of next week's auction.

The March series of the long gilt finished 2½p lower at £113½, as almost 50,000 contracts were completed. Treasury 3 per cent 2015 lost ½p to £107, while Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was unchanged at £104½.

CI-NYORK: Share trading was volatile in morning trade as "double-whisking" expirations took their toll on the Dow Jones industrial average. By midday it was 16.62 points lower at 6,912.76.

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## MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday): Dow Jones 6912.76 (-16.62) S&P Composite 801.67 (-1.13)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 19034.54 (-17.17)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 13441.85 (-13.52)

Amsterdam: EOE Index 728.42 (-4.79)

Sydney: AO 2475.53 (-1.08)

Frankfurt: DAX 2184.09 (-1.04)

Singapore: Straits 2241.28 (-10.70)

Brussels: General 1662.24 (-41.27)

Paris: CAC-40 2502.94 (-12.48)

Zurich: SMI 942.80 (-1.60)

London: FT 30 2864.5 (-10.6)

FT 100 4336.8 (-19.3)

FTSE 250 2145.8 (-7.08)

FTSE 100 2142.72 (-5.33)

FT All-Share 2115.45 (-7.23)

FT 1000 Share Index 2187.57 (-7.79)

FT Fixed Interest 120.13 (-0.09)

FT Govt Sec 90.64 (-0.13)

SEAC Volume 780,000

US: DOW 6912.76 (-16.62)

German Mark: 2723.3 (-0.029)

Bank of England official rate (4pm) 5.25%

ECU 1.3682

ESR 1.675

1944 Jan 2.478 Jan 1997=100

1939 Jan 1.131 Jan 1997=100

RECENT ISSUES

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RISSE: Arjo Wiggins 181p (+9½p)

Eclipse Blinds 140p (+8p)

Brown Dolphin 201p (+10½p)

Adams 517p (+8½p)

## TEMPUS

### Mountainous costs

THERE was a time when shy foreign depositors would meekly accept nil or even negative interest on their money just for the privilege of a Swiss franc account. Today, light capital has a choice of homes, asset management is a competitive business and Swiss bankers have to work for a living.

UBS is learning, but very slowly. Six years of Swiss recession finally forced the bank to close branches, sack staff and erect huge bad debt provisions. Taking the pain in advance will shrink the balance sheet and improve next year's income account, thus providing a useful boost to UBS's slim return on capital of 7 per cent.

But this is mere tinkering — a target return of 12 per cent compares badly with British or US competitors that earn returns double that rate. Such big money earning meagre returns suggests UBS might take a leaf from Anglo-American banks and buy back its shares, but the Swiss have a problem.

UBS has set its heart on securities and corporate finance, spending heavily to buy in expensive bodies in New York and London. Growth in overseas staff numbers outweighed the headcount attrition in Switzerland last year, but capital markets and corporate finance provided the bulk of the profits growth.

Building up overhead in a volatile industry is a high-risk strategy and UBS needs a shield to protect it from a market downturn. Hence its reluctance to part with its capital cushion. With the Swiss economy still lame and its remaining fortunes riding on a frothy world market, UBS investors are on a hiding to nothing.

## Salvesen

INVESTORS in Christian Salvesen, the company that once made a living from washing, must feel that they are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.

They face a choice between the performance of a fashionable demerger and special dividend payout, or rebel shareholders, led by a former chairman and a new would-be chief executive. Both teams promise enhanced value but neither sounds convincing.

Last year, the incumbent management spurned a takeover approach from Hays without consulting shareholders. Their demerger proposal assumes that the value of the profitable Agate plant hire business is being depressed by boring old transport and

logistics. But a sum of the parts valuation suggests there is little in the argument and the incumbents have no strategy to grow logistics, hence the plan to return capital to shareholders.

The rebels are more bullish, proposing to raise the performance of logistics with acquisitions. But Salvesen is hardly in a strong position to

play the role of industry consolidator. Meanwhile Hays is waiting in the wings, doubtless hoping that a demerged and depressed Salvesen logistics division would make a more manageable and cheaper morsel. In the circumstances, investors would be better off selling Salvesen in one piece to Hays at a better price.

EDITORIAL BY CARL MORTIMER

## BEACHED WHALE

Christian Salvesen share price

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb

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# WEEKEND MONEY

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Turning up the heat on British Gas

ETHICAL STANCE 38

Increase your wealth with a clear conscience

THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

## Shock waves of strong sterling

For the person in the street, the only obvious effect of a sharp rise in the strength of sterling against other currencies is that holidays suddenly become much cheaper.

However, the pound's rise over the last few months will have a profound effect on all aspects of the economy, from the price of mortgages to the cost of sugar. It will also have a big impact on investments, savings, fixed-interest securities such as gilts, and company profits.

As the company reporting season begins, some, such as Reuters, the communications group, are already blaming disappointing figures on sterling's strength. Volkswagen, the German carmaker, gave warning last week that it would cease to buy British car components if they continued to get more expensive because of sterling's inconvertible rise. Here *The Times* explains what the long-term impact of the strong pound will be.

**Interest rates.** The base rate in the UK is one of the highest among the developed nations. Foreign investors, such as the Americans, Japanese and continental Europeans, have rushed to invest in sterling. The situation is unlikely to change because these countries do not appear likely to increase rates enough to attract back investors.

Despite pressure from the Bank of England, Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, is refusing to raise the UK base rate. However, many economists, including Chris Turner at BZW, believe that interest rates will have to go up to try

Caroline Merrell looks at the rising pound's profound effect on all aspects of the economy

to ease inflationary pressures. Mr Turner said: "We are still looking for three increases in base rates, bringing the total rise before the end of the year to 0.75 or 1 per cent."

Rises in the base rate will be matched by rises in mortgage rates and savings rates. A rise in interest rates means that foreigners will be more likely to continue to invest in sterling, thus keeping the pound strong.

**Inflation.** At the moment, the Government is trying to hit its inflationary target of 2.5 per cent, without increasing interest rates. A strong pound is deemed to be a deflationary factor. Last year an estimated £178 billion was spent on imports. This same sum of money could buy many more imports this year, which means that the price of goods may not rise.

**Company profits.** These are almost certainly going to be hit by the rise in the pound. Nearly half of the profits earned by the biggest 100 companies in the UK are earned from abroad. These profits will be damaged by a strong pound.

However, John Hatherly,

M&G head of research, said: "The problems caused by the translation of overseas profits into sterling may be matched by companies borrowing overseas and paying off the interest in pounds."

**UK manufacturers.** The biggest victims of the rising pound will be UK manufacturing companies, many of which rely on export sales for a large part of their profits. Their goods will now be more expensive than many of their competitors' goods.

The damage will be slightly mitigated by the fact that UK companies will have to pay less for their raw materials. However, Mr Hatherly said: "Manufacturing companies in Germany did well despite the rise of the mark against the other currencies... German companies managed to become very much more efficient. In the UK, manufacturers will have to go through a period of painful adjustment."

**Unit and investment trusts.** At the end of last year many of the returns made on rising world markets by those with internationally invested unit trusts, personal equity plans

and investment trusts were wiped out by the currency movements.

Mr Hatherly said: "Many fund managers have in the past relied on a devaluing pound to boost returns from overseas investments. They will now have to pay much more attention to the underlying stock." Mr Hatherly said he advised investors who were concerned about currency risk to keep their investments restricted to the UK.

**Gilt-edged stocks.** Some investment managers believe that gilts are a particularly good buy at the moment. Ten-year gilts currently yield around 7.1 per cent, more than 1 per cent higher than the German equivalent. Foreign investors may be attracted by the yield and the fact that any income earned will be in sterling, which is appreciating in value.

More buyers will push up the price and the overall returns. Investments that rely on gilts include National Savings products and some fixed-interest unit trusts.

**Holidays.** One of the most appealing factors about the pound's rise is that holidays will be cheaper. According to American Express, £1 bought 7.53 francs a year ago. Now £1 buys 9.06 francs — a difference of nearly 20 per cent. Holiday-makers to Spain were given 187 pesetas for each pound exchanged, today they will receive 229 pesetas — 22 per cent more. However, those holidaying in the US now get \$1.57 to the pound, compared with \$1.49 a year ago — a 5 per cent difference.

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

## Halifax unmoved by campaign

The Halifax Building Society is refusing to bow to pressure from MPs and consumer bodies to compensate elderly, widowed and disabled members who have been excluded from the share distribution because their accounts are run by trustees.

As the society's 8.5 million members prepare to vote at Monday's special general meeting on the plans to become a bank, pressure is growing for the society to use the occasion to commit itself to paying free shares directly to disabled members and others

whose savings are handled by trustees. *The Times* has been campaigning against societies that refuse to give free shares to such members in their own right. Societies argue that only the first named on the account is a member and that members can receive only one payout each.

This excludes thousands of disabled and elderly people who are unable to handle their financial affairs and whose accounts are held in the name of relatives, friends or professionals acting as trustees.

Douglas French, MP,

sponsor of a Private Member's Bill which would force societies to include such disenfranchised people in their payout schemes, this week called on the Halifax to use Monday's meeting to make a "significant gesture and promise to come forward with a formula to recognise the interests of people being left out".

Mr French's Bill received an unopposed first reading in the Lords last Monday and will receive its second reading next Friday. If the Bill goes through unopposed, it could receive

Royal Assent in early March. As it stands, the Bill is not retrospective. The Halifax and other societies, including the Woolwich and the Alliance & Leicester, would not be forced to include trustee-held accounts in bonus payouts.

However, Mr French believes the societies have an "enormous moral obligation" to do so. He said: "The Halifax has an untenable position to say its scheme is fair. It is clear what the wishes of Parliament and public are."

SARA MCCONNELL

## Banks build the bottom line

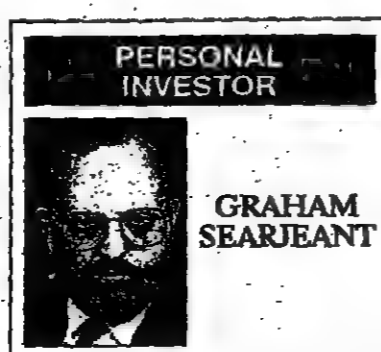
Traditionally, a pound managed by a great British bank was reckoned to be worth a fair bit less than the pound in your pocket. The skills of your friendly local bank manager devalued the assets he ran. Whereas most companies were valued by the stock market at more than their balance sheet worth, banks were priced at a discount.

There was, it turned out, a sound reason. In the 1970s and 1980s, banks showed an uncanny knack for losing money in large quantities. The more dynamic they became, the more spectacular the disasters for shareholders.

Few creatures are more dynamic than a lemming in full cry. Almost as one, banks successively rushed to lend on property, which crashed, on American oil and property, which dried, for small business expansion, which shrunk rapidly in the 1990 slump, and for big developments that ran into trouble.

Profitable business was forever undermined by sometimes huge provisions against bad debts. Even some of their hefty dividends, the main solace for investors, were slashed. Midland, one of the worst hit, was finally taken over by Far East champion HSBC, to City relief. Banks were a laughing stock.

Not any more. For a while, banks have been disaster-free and underlying profits have grown apace. Bank shares have been the darlings of the market, leading and outpacing the market averages. Over the past five years, the FT-SE retail bank index has soared by nearly 300 per cent, against about 75 per cent for the all-share index. Powered



PERSONAL INVESTOR

GRAHAM SEARJEANT

more by profits than retreating, bank shares now typically trade at two to three times book value.

Can it last? It is hard to believe banks have given up old habits. But there are signs of fundamental change. Sir Brian Pitman, whose dedication to shareholder value paid big dividends at Lloyds, inspired a new generation of unselfish bottom-line bank bosses. They drive to cut costs and cut again, to match low-cost building societies and Abbey National, which has made a successful transition to banking. Telephones, computers and cash machines enabled this cost revolution and bring new products.

If small customers quit in fury when they find their branch has closed, they bank manager has been fired along with the staff, or been replaced by a youthful salesman, and they can only communicate with a faulty computer with no memory, then too bad. New customers can be bought and the cost of servicing them cut in turn. It seems to work. Top

British banks are now among the world's most profitable.

Clearing banks' cost ratios are still high, allowing for their broader mix of business; NatWest is now wielding the sabre on staff and branches. Expansion focuses on areas such as consumer credit, mortgages and fund management, historically safer than ambitious foreign ventures. Banks have infiltrated potential competition from telephone banking and credit cards and will partake in the supermarket challenge.

There is also a new caution. Barclays, which used to have to run to shareholders for more gambling money, now passes surplus capital back to shareholders rather than feeling compelled to lend it on any plausible passing proposition. Best of all, the UK economy that banks operate in has become quieter: steadier interest rates, steadier price levels and therefore less instability in the markets on which borrowers rely. If this continues, banks have a chance of staying on the straight and narrow.

Things can still go wrong. High profits invite competition, not least from converting building societies. Credit quality will deteriorate. Profit-taking on the Barclays results shows that a long bull market creates its own risks. The sector, though still not highly rated, is vulnerable to a market break. Soon, however, millions of people will become investors in new banks with new potential such as Halifax, Woolwich and Alliance & Leicester. They should not be in a hurry to sell. These now look the best way into the sector.

## HOME IN ON OUR RANGE

MONEYBUILDER PEP RANGE: BEST VALUE AND TOP PERFORMANCE

1ST PLACE  
MICROPOL  
AWARDS

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## Beware the supermarket loss leader

Sainsbury's. Even its name sounds downbeat, as tired as its stores. In the dreary aisles and the populous queues of my local branch, I seldom feel more like singing the blues.

The supermarket is now hoping to regain its place in the nation's affections by diversifying into banking. The move suggests that Sainsbury's may, after all, be capable of copying the successful innovations of others.

As Delia Smith could tell you, there is much to be gained by following a tried and tested recipe. The highly efficient First Direct, created by the Midland, has obviously served as one model for the Sainsbury's bank. Sainsbury's has begun well by offering a highly competitive 5.75 per cent rate on balances of as little as £1. Small savers could earn a better return only by taking a risk with their money. These customers have largely



ANNE ASHWORTH  
Personal Finance Editor

been forgotten by the building societies who prefer investors with larger sums. Anyone now aspiring to open an account with £100 is seen only as a speculator, hoping to benefit from a future conversion.

The generous interest rate should also ensure that Sainsbury's wins a significant number of new savers when Halifax and the other societies becoming banks distribute their windfalls in the summer.

Savers who have been locked into low-paying accounts will be anxious

to find a new home for their cash. The Abbey National has already declared its intention to win as much of this money as possible. Another rival should act in the most satisfactory way to increase rates all round.

Customers, however, should not be overwhelmed by Sainsbury's generosity. Its savings account is a loss leader. If you sign up with the supermarket, it may attempt to encourage you to fill your trolley with other financial products but you would be best advised to shop around.

### Beyond belief

BOWING to demands for information from its 1.1 million policyholders, Scottish Amicable this week said it will name its chosen bidder in March. However, the situation remains far from satisfactory. The with-profit policyholders who own Scottish Amicable will have no chance to compare the eight rival offers from Abbey National, the Prudential and others.

The Scottish Amicable board will be guided in its decision by SBC Warburg and the other advisers who a few weeks ago recommended the company's flawed plan for its future. This was presented as "a real opportunity to maximise value for with-profit policyholders", although it richly rewarded directors and gave the policyholders a paltry sum. How will anyone have any faith in their opinion?

A proposal to buy insurance to ring-fence assets is expected, says Marianne Curphey

## A new look at long-term care

Tens of thousands of elderly people who could need nursing home care in the final years will learn within weeks how the Government expects them to pay for it.

Although the long-awaited draft Bill on long-term care is due to be published soon, there will be a consultation period for insurers and charities, and ministers admit it is unlikely to become law before the general election.

That leaves many about to enter private nursing homes confused and anxious. It also means that those who are ill and may need nursing be-

tween now and the summer face a dilemma.

The draft Bill is expected to propose a partnership scheme whereby an individual may buy an insurance policy to ring-fence their assets and prevent a proportion of them being used to pay for care.

The working details have not yet been released, but they are expected to suggest that for every £1 worth of insurance taken out, the Government will "disregard" between £1.50 and £2 of assets.

In Britain, single pensioners with assets of between £10,000 and £16,000 now have to contribute towards a propor-

tion of the cost of nursing care, while those with more than £16,000, including their homes, have to meet the full bill. These regulations have been criticised for penalising pensioners who save.

Under new proposals expected, if a person bought insurance worth £40,000, then, together with the £16,000 "disregarded", for single pensioners, the State would allow assets worth between £56,000 and £96,000 to be left free for inheritance, before it claimed any surplus to cover long-term care costs.

Age Concern England said that it was concerned that the

proposals would benefit a very small number of people who could afford to pay for such insurance. "We would like to see all political parties making a commitment to providing free nursing care to everyone."

The Continuing Care Conference, which represents charities, care providers, local authorities, financial product providers and consumer organisations, called on all the political parties to give the issue top priority during the election campaign.

It says it is concerned that none of the parties has presented comprehensive proposals that deal with the long-

term and the immediate problems facing large numbers of older people. About 160,000 older people go into nursing or residential homes each year and 40,000 people are forced to sell their homes to meet long-term care costs.

Frank Field, Labour MP and chairman of the Social Security Select Committee, proposes that people should buy insurance to cover the risk of needing professional care at the end of their lives. Everyone would pay 3 per cent of their income towards this, and payments would be triggered when the person qualified for help for medical reasons.



Fears over the cost of care mean only the likes of Joe in Cocoon face a free-wheeling future

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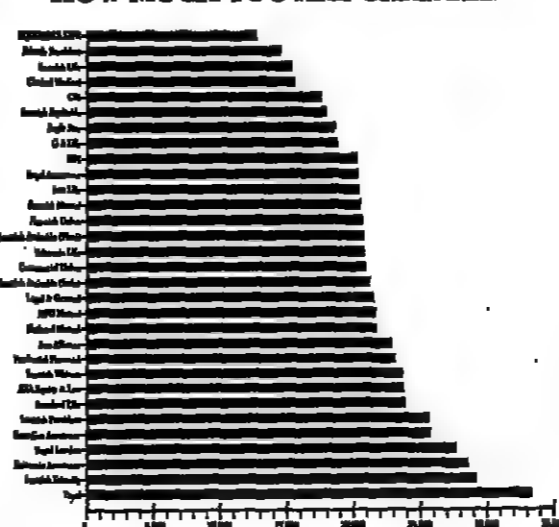
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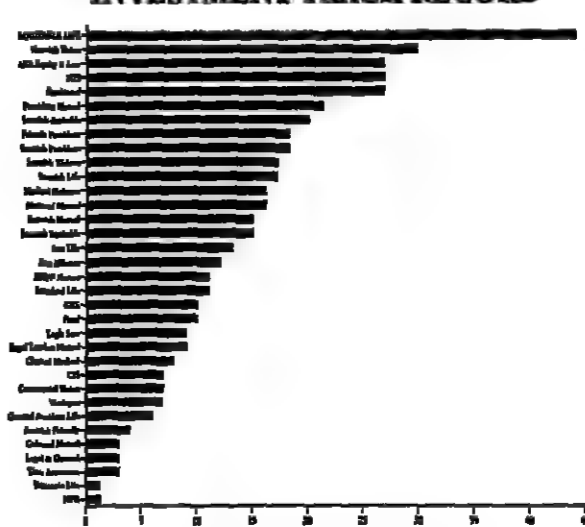
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Martin Waller concludes his five-part series on investing

# Bid battles explained

## BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE STOCK MARKET



You are nearly there. There are just a few odd points you need to know, starting with what happens when one company bids for another.

### Takeover bids

Our lives are crisscrossed with decisions. Some we take immediately, others we have a few days to mull over. Few of us have two whole months to decide even the most serious.

Peculiarly, this is how long you get to decide whether or not to sell your shares to a company that may want to buy them. The mechanics of the bid are thus, Company A says it wants to buy Company B. It names a price it is prepared to pay for each share — generally well above that share's previous price, unless the bid is widely expected.

The offer may be straight cash, a mixture of cash and new shares or loans to be issued by Company A. Another type of offer, although rare, is one entirely of new shares. If the offer includes shares, there will generally be a full cash alternative pitched slightly below the value of the share offer.

If you have shares in Company B, you must decide if the offer fully values them. Consult a financial adviser or the press, and remember the first rule: never hurry. If the offer is agreed by Company A immediately, a joint announcement is made that a deal has been done.

If it is contested, the board of Company B will generally advise its shareholders to take no action. Follow this advice: most contested bids have to be raised to be successful, and first offers are often just sighting shots. But if you accept the first offer and it is later raised, you get the higher amount anyway.

Once a formal document is issued, the takeover has 60 days to be resolved. Although most companies' shares are owned by big City institutions, small shareholders are of some importance. The bidder must gain the assent of more than 50 per cent of the shares issued. Bids have been won or lost by just a few thousand shares. The offer document will tell you how to accept. You will then receive circulars from both sides. Company B's record is "seriously flawed", Company A could run Company B better, and so on — a quick read and bin most of it.

If you fail to accept and the bid succeeds, obviously you get the price on offer. If a majority accept, it is always best to go along with them. Conversely, you do not get the money if the bid fails, even if you have accepted it. If it fails, expect the share price, which will have risen to approach the terms on offer, to crash back again.

**The players**  
City operators today may be conglomerates, huge financial institutions that might house merchant banks advising companies on finance and City business, such as takeovers and broking businesses that buy



Beware: the City is not without its Arthur Daley characters

and sell shares. They may also own fund managers that hold them long-term, although most are independent and skilled at playing off banks and brokers against each other.

Whatever the structure, they are supposed to operate separately. If a merchant bank learns that its client, Company A, is to bid for Company B tomorrow and the shares can be expected to rise, it is clearly unacceptable for a banker to tell the brokers to buy the shares now. The two businesses are under one roof, but are said to be separated by a Chinese Wall.

I said "supposed". Actions such as the purchase I just described are not unknown, and are an example of insider trading and illegal, as would be the purchase of shares in Company B by a company A employee who knew about the bid beforehand. But all this does happen — it is not unusual for shares in a company to rocket before a bid is announced. Clearly, somebody knew and dealt in the shares. But there are few successful prosecutions.

### AIM

The Alternative Investment Market (AIM) is a kindergarden for companies that lack the mature trading record that the Stock Exchange requires for admission to the Official List.

the main body of traded shares. Created in June 1995, it is relatively new, as are most of the companies quoted on it. They are, by definition, risky investments. Any money invested in AIM stock should be regarded similarly to visiting a racetrack. You could lose the lot.

### Tax

Dividends are paid net of tax, which is paid in advance by the company. This absolves most investors from having to pay tax up to the standard rate. If you pay higher-rate tax you must make up the difference. If you pay no tax, you can reclaim it.

So there you are. I have catered through the basics of what every shareholder should know. The most important quality for any investor is caution. Not everyone in the City is a crook, an Arthur Daley or a con-man. But some are.

Regard anyone approaching you with an investment opportunity as you would a second-hand car dealer. Plenty of those are honest, too, and there are perfectly good cars on their forecourts. But there are two sides to every share purchase. If the shares you are being urged to buy are such a good deal, why is the other side so keen to sell? Happy investing.

The venture capital industry reflects the fortunes of a vital area of the economy: small and medium-sized enterprises. These businesses play a key role in wealth creation and job creation in the UK, in the European Union, in the United States and in "tiger economies" of South East Asia. An economy with a third and expanding number of SMEs is almost certainly doing well.

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and **James Kitchenham** meets a man who brought gas contracts down to earth

# Gas is no laughing matter

**J**ohn Freaake, a retired oil company geologist from Sussex, failed to see the funny side of British Gas's fixed-price "take-or-pay" contracts fiasco for which it expected its customers to pay. So he was delighted when Kent and Sussex were chosen as early areas for competitive gas supply distributors under the deregulation of the industry. But then his problems started.

"I wanted to do an analysis of the different packages offered by the competing companies, but some of them were coy to the point of secrecy about what they were offering and it was almost impossible to get information from some companies."

"I originally contacted Ofgas, the regulator, to get the names of the companies and then began telephoning them. Some of them took three or four calls to get a response and some still had not sent their information and contracts a month after I originally contacted them. It seemed a strange way to win customers."

Having had considerable experience of constructing and using databases in the oil industry, when he had most of the information from the competing companies to hand, he set up a database on his home computer.

His intention was to make an analysis to find the best supplier on the basis of tariff price, standing charge and method of payment.

He decided to exclude appliance maintenance costs as

he feels it is cheaper to use an independent engineer than to have a British Gas or similar service contract.

Likewise he dismissed store voucher offers and other tiny inducements as "an irrelevance". But again he hit problems trying to compare like-with-like for each company against his present British Gas contract.

**"One company did not give details of its discounts at all. It simply had a box to tick on the contract if you were interested in a discount. I rang up to find out about the further discount and no one could tell me anything about it."**

Eventually, of the 11 companies on whose figures he could do a reasonable analysis, Mr Freake found that Scottish Power and SWEBGas gave the greatest savings over British Gas at 27 per cent and 23.74 per cent respectively.

This was calculated using the cheapest option available — a monthly direct debit secured at a 4 per cent discount, or a lower tariff rate. Most contracts are rolling ones, and companies offer fixed terms.

He concluded: "Some of these offers are not as transparent as they could be. I think Ofgas could have insisted that contracts were offered on a standardised basis so that consumers could make easy direct comparisons between companies. Whichever company you choose, do read the supply contract carefully."



**John Freake set up his own database to try to make sense of competing gas contracts**

Company name	Saving (%) on British Gas	Tariff per kwh/hour	Standing charge per year
Scottish Power	27	1.085	£36.48
SWEB Gas	23.74	1.177	£0.00
British Fuels Gas	20.49	1.25	£0.00
Southern Electric	20.33	1.20	£30.60
Eastern Natural Gas	19.52	1.212	£31.02
Tesco & Calor Gas	18.86	1.254	£39.95
Amrad	17.84	1.214	£47.00
Northern Electric	16.99	1.26	£28.98
London Total Energy	14.12	1.3	£29.20
Bescon Gas	11.92	1.36	£28.00
British Gas Trading	0	1.32	£36.34

## Centrica moves dynamically — down

About £250,000 was spent by British Gas last year on a rebranding exercise for the two companies that were to emerge from its planned demerger. The sum bought two logos and two names – BG and Centrica. The provenance of the former is easy to guess: the latter, though, was dreamt up to signify 'quickly moving and dynamic'. The appropriateness of the rebranding was felt by former British Gas shareholders this week as the shares of the newly demerged Centrica move quickly and dynamically down.

British Gas assets are now divided into BG plc, the gas supply and pipeline business, and Centrica, the retail side. Centrica is also laden with the "take or pay" contracts and the Morecambe Bay gas field. These two factors continue to cast a shadow over the future perfor-

mance of the company, as analysts in the gas market are not entirely clear what their impact will be. On the first day of trading, a total of 54.5 million Centrica shares changed hands and the price fell by 13.5 per cent to 65½p while 20 million BG shares changed hands lifting the price by 2½p to 174½p.

**Y**esterday the shares were 68½p and 175½p, respectively. This compares with the share price of the merged British Gas, at the end of last week, of 247½p. This represents a net loss to the estimated 1.7 million small shareholders in British Gas, Sids. of 1 per cent.

The price of Céntrica was not helped by a pronouncement from Merrill Lynch, the broker, that the shares could be worth as little as 40p, though a trad-

ing range of 40p to 80p is expected. Many financial advisers advise clients to sell Centrica. The stock may be very volatile and no dividend is likely in the foreseeable future. Mathew Orr, of Killik & Co, the broker, said: 'This is not the type of company many small investors thought they were buying when they invested in British Gas.' BG plc, the biggest part of the company, currently yields 7.1 per cent, high in comparison with other utilities. Some advisers advocate holding BG shares for the dividend alone. But these may be cut in future, as it is being examined by Clare Spottiswoode, the gas regulator, who wants greater competition. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission is also looking at pricing issues.

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Caroline Merrell on the plan to stop shoppers from losing interest

# Sainsbury banks on new services

The chore of doing the weekly shopping will take a new twist in the coming months as three of the United Kingdom's biggest supermarkets begin to roll out banking services for their customers. Millions of people will now have access to credit cards and savings accounts which will give them discounts off their weekly shopping bills.

Sainsbury this week unveiled its plan to offer banking services to its ten million customers via a joint venture with the Bank of Scotland. Sainsbury is spending around £30 million on the bank, through which it hopes to encourage greater customer loyalty and reverse its ailing fortunes. Sainsbury has begun to lose market share to Tesco and Sainsbury, and earlier this year was forced to issue a profit warning — an action that hit the share price and cut its market capitalisation by £75 million.

Sainsbury cited increased competition with the other supermarkets as the cause of the downgrade in profits from £710 million to £640 million for 1996 to 1997. Four million of this decrease was attributed to the launch of the bank, while a further £10 million reduction was attributed to the extra costs of its Reward loyalty card — a scheme that generates discounts for customers.

Sainsbury's Bank will offer a choice of two credit cards and two savings accounts. The credit cards can be used to build up reward points that can generate discounts on the weekly shopping bill, while the instant access saver account offers a market-leading interest rate of 5.75 per cent.

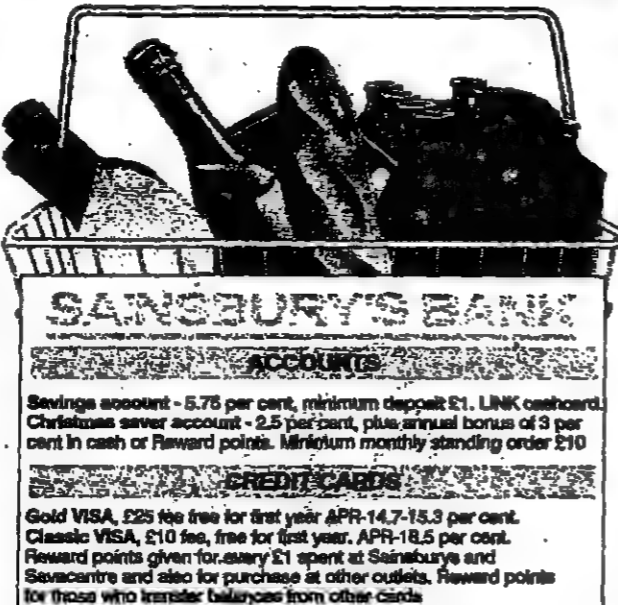
The other account, the monthly Christmas saving account, offers an interest rate of 2.5 per cent, plus an annual 3 per cent bonus if no money is withdrawn before the end of the year.

The 5.75 per cent interest compares with rates of between 0.75 and 3.15 per cent offered by Barclays, 0.5 and 3.25 per cent offered by Halifax, and 2 and 3.25 per cent offered by Midland.

Kevin McCarten, Sainsbury's marketing director, said: "We're pleased to be the first supermarket to open a bank and offer our customers choice and flexibility."



Supermarket first: the new Sainsbury's Bank will be available initially in 244 stores



Sainsbury's Bank accounts

Savings account - 5.75 per cent, minimum deposit £1. LINK overhead. Christmas saver account - 2.5 per cent, plus annual bonus of 3 per cent in cash or Reward points. Minimum monthly standing order £10.

Credit cards

Gold VISA, £25 fee free for first year APR 14.7-15.3 per cent. Classic VISA, £10 fee, free for first year, APR 18.5 per cent. Reward points given for every £1 spent at Sainsbury's and Savacentre and also for purchase at other outlets. Reward points for those who transfer balances from other cards.

The banking services come complete with a flexibly complicated reward point system. Each £1 spent at Sainsbury's, Savacentre or Homebase using one of the two credit cards and Sainsbury's reward card will generate two points. Every £1 spent on credit cards at any other retailer will generate half a reward point.

With 250 points you can claim a £2.50 discount voucher, which means customers could benefit from a 1 to 2 per cent discount on their shopping bills. Sainsbury is also offering to give Air Miles in exchange for points generated through spending at its stores. Reward points generated through spending at other outlets will not qualify to be swapped for Air Miles.

Saving in the Christmas account can also bring benefits in terms of reward points. The

2.5 per cent interest and the 3 per cent bonus can be waived in favour of the points — a saving of £40 per month will generate 376 reward points in one year, plus 451 bonus points, representing a saving of £8.70 on groceries.

Sainsbury's Bank does not offer overdrafts, nor does it have any intention of doing so. A spokeswoman said: "This is a savings account, not a current account."

Sainsbury's Gold Visa card has an annual fee of £25 and an APR of 14.7 per cent, while the Classic Visa card has a £10 fee and an APR of 18.5 per cent. The annual fee is waived for the first year. The lowest APRs on the market are from RBS Advanta and the People's Bank of Connecticut, at 11.9 per cent and 14.4 per cent respectively.

Offerings from the other stores do not have quite the same range. Sainsbury, for instance, is keen to emphasise that it is not launching a bank. The store is offering a savings account in conjunction with Abbey National — the account offers 5 per cent interest and reward points for spending. Sainsbury may offer a fuller banking service at a later date.

Tesco, on the other hand, chose St Valentine's Day to abandon its link with NatWest and join forces with the Royal Bank of Scotland to set up a joint venture offering financial services. This store already offers Clubcard Plus, a savings account offering 5.5 per cent interest.

Tesco plans to offer a credit card in the summer and add additional products, including savings accounts and personal insurance, at a later date.

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Abbey National Instant Saver	2.80%	2.30%	2.50%	2.50%	2.75%	2.75%	3.25%	3.25%
Halifax Liquid Gold	2.45%	2.45%	2.65%	2.65%	2.95%	2.95%	3.25%	3.25%
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Source: Moneyfacts 18th February 1997

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Take a ten-year view when assessing funds, says Gavin Lumsden

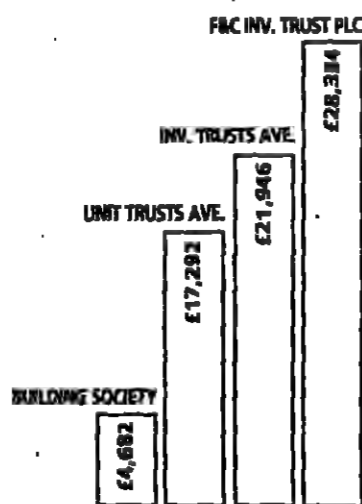


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## Which is most trustworthy?



For most first-time equity investors choosing pooled funds, such as unit trusts and investment trusts, investing in the UK is the natural step. But how have these funds performed in the long term?

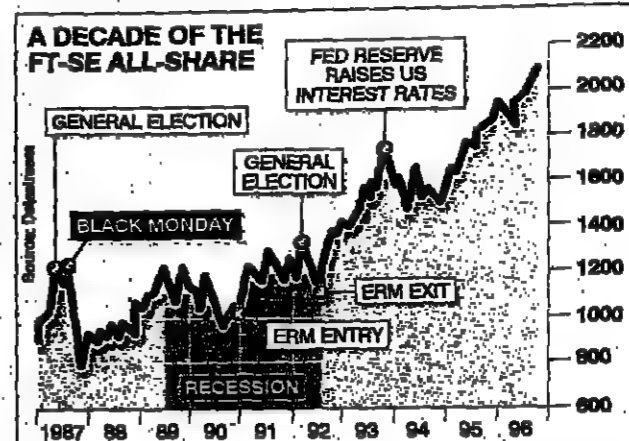
Fund managers often quote their five-year performances, but ten-year periods are more useful because consistent performers are more likely to come out on top. A longer time period also enables you to judge how funds have coped with adverse market conditions as well as the good times.

A ten-year view also helps to put stock market falls into perspective, such as the 400-point drop in the FT-SE All-Share after Black Monday in October 1987. The wave of forced selling from distressed investors even forced some fund managers temporarily to suspend their unit trusts.

Since then the index has suffered three major falls as the economy struggled through a recession and reacted badly to the first increase in US interest rates in February 1994. Despite this the overall direction has been upwards, and in the past two years a bull run has taken it to record levels.

Propelled by this economic momentum, all but two of the 363 funds investing in the UK have made money for their holders over ten years. However, there is a wide disparity of returns and investors should review their funds regularly.

Fewer than half of the UK-focused unit trusts have a ten-year track record, demonstrating the frenetic pace at which investment funds have developed. Of the 305 that do, Newton Income has triumphed. Had you invested £1,000 in this fund in January 1987 and reinvested all the



income, you would have £4,814.12 today. By contrast, investors in Evermore Recovery would have only £1,242.86. Nevertheless, 283 unit trusts would have doubled your money.

However, only 10 per cent of these UK unit trusts actually beat the All-Share index in total returns. According to Micropal, the statistics provider, the index would have turned the £1,000 into £3,267.53 over the past ten years, a feat which only 28 funds were able to beat.

Doesn't this illustrate the incompetence of fund managers in the City? Shouldn't we switch to tracker funds, which dispense with the stock-picking skills of fund managers by buying everything on the index? Not necessarily, says Chris Poll, head of Micropal. He points out that the index is only a guide and does not include the cost of dealing in shares.

None of the unit trusts tracking the All-Share actually has a ten-year record, but if they did their result would likely be much lower than the index. It is impossible for trackers to match the index precisely, and all have a small tracking error. More importantly, what trackers save on fund managers' wages they pay back in the increased expenses of dealing in every available stock.

The average unit trust charges investors between 1.25 per cent and 1.5 per cent of their

holdings a year, which is equivalent to around 18 per cent over ten years. If you subtract this from the All-Share return you get less than £2,680. Using this figure the number of "successful" unit trusts quadruples to 120. This still leaves 185 funds in the dust.

Although investment trusts charge less in annual management fees, it is worthwhile comparing them against the figures for unit trusts. Overall, investment trusts provide higher returns but with higher risks. Some 15 of the 48 investment trusts investing in the UK with a ten-year track record returned more than £2,680, around three times the proportion of unit trusts, with 28 exceeding the costed All-Share figure. 34 more than doubled the £1,000 initial investment.

The top performer was Candover which returned £10,861.83 on the £1,000 investment. However, comparison with the All-Share is unfair as this is a high-risk venture capital fund investing in unlisted companies outside the index.

However, at the bottom of the table are the unfortunate capital shareholders of Jove, a split capital trust, who have seen their investment plummet to just £299.74.

Nigel Thomas, fund manager of the second-placed Pembroke Growth unit trust, says the search for portfolio diversity leads many managers to underperform the index. Many fund managers, like Mr Thomas, would be reluctant to hold BP and Shell together even if doing this reflected the make-up of the index.

Investors are paying fund managers to get their best right. Jonathan Fry, investment director of Premier Fund Managers in Guildford, says it is no good letting them off the hook. He advises investors to copy the professionals.

He says: "Look at what the pension funds do, they hold triennial beauty parades and if the performance has not been up to scratch they change the manager or put him on 12 months' notice."

That is what private investors have to do. Too many take their pension or choose a unit trust and never review how it is performing."

TOP PERFORMERS		
Fund	Return by £1000 offer to offer, net income reinvested	Rank
Unit trusts		
Newton Income	£4,814.12	1
Pembroke Growth	£10,861.83	2
Guildford Premier	£3,267.53	3
Flintley Special Situations	£2,672.12	4
Capital Square Investor	£2,667.37	5
Investment trusts		
Berkley UK Smaller Cos	£1,388.88	301
Henderson Smaller Cos	£1,325.58	302
Equitable Special Sit	£1,295.02	303
Alfred Charles Second	£1,288.51	304
Smaller Companies	£1,242.86	305
Investment trusts		
Candover	£10,861.83	1
Rights & Issues - Income	£7,294.43	2
Rights & Issues - Capital	£5,422.48	3
Midwest Dev Fund	£5,133.21	4
Value and Income	£4,821.24	5
Investment trusts		
Gowd Strategic	£1,588.58	44
Franklinston Unit - Income	£1,514.68	45
Praxis Warrants	£1,367.14	46
Praxis UK - Capital	£1,103.73	47
Trust of Property Shares	£384.41	48
Jove - Capital (2004)	£299.74	49

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Karen Zagor on what investors should do when markets are high

# Play safe for a steady income

Investors are warned regularly that trying to time the stock market is a fool's game. After all, anyone who listened to the stock market bears and left their money in the building society last year would have missed out on one of the great bull runs of all time. But for many would-be investors, the rash of stock market record highs can lead to a real dilemma.

When markets are exceedingly high, there is a very real danger that they will plummet. Anyone able to take a 20-year view of the stock market should be able to ride out any storm, but investors near retirement do not have that luxury.

At the same time, those near retirement may be most in need of a way of boosting their income, and equity investments are often the best way to supplement a pension and compensate for a lost salary. Most advisers would agree

that anyone who cannot take a three-year or four-year view on their investment should steer clear of stocks. But even with markets at record levels, anyone who can take a long-term view should probably have some equities in their portfolio.

Mark Bolland, of Chamberlain de Broe, the independent financial adviser, says: "I am a bear, but it is riskier to be out of the market than in. The problem is, you could wait six months anticipating a crash and the market could hold its own."

"With the market so high, it makes sense to dribble your money in, either in monthly or quarterly instalments, and to make sure you have a good investment mix with some exposure to tracker funds, equity funds, individual stocks and preference shares to get the income you need. But you should always have a

chunk of cash on hand to help out if there is a market wobble."

How you structure your investments will depend largely on your income needs. If you have £250,000 to invest, perhaps from the sale of your family home, and you need an extra £500 a month, you could generate the income by leaving the money in the bank.

Other relatively safe income-generating options include gilts, which are currently yielding about 7.5 per cent and preference funds, which yield about 8.5 per cent to 9 per cent. But there will be some capital erosion with these investments, and the best place to compensate for that depreciation is in the stock market.

Jonathan Gumpel, of Brooks Macdonald Gayer, the independent financial adviser, says: "If you want complete security, I would advise stock-

ing the money in the building society. But for anyone who is 55 and looking for income over the next 20 years, I would probably advise being invested with a proportion of their funds perhaps set up as a quarterly savings plan to phase in the money."

"For people coming to us with cash, we would generally advise only being 45 per cent invested, then phasing in the other 55 per cent over a period of years. We would accelerate phasing the money in if there was a market fall."

Mr Gumpel believes that investment trusts are good value at the moment for investors looking for income because the prices already reflect concern about the high markets and a number of investment trusts are trading at a discount to their net assets.

He expects the discounts to narrow eventually, so investors should be able to profit from the narrowing, as well as receiving income from the investment.

"I would think a combination of UK high-interest funds such as Invesco Convertible, plus Scottish Mortgage for an element of growth and something like Murray International, which is wholly international, to take advantage of the strong pound at the moment would be a good mix," Mr Gumpel says.

Nervous income investors can take heart from the knowledge that, at a time of high markets, they are in a stronger position than those investing for capital growth.

With the recession behind us, we are not in a period where companies are cutting their dividends, so even if the market crashes there should be a continuing stream of income.

So if you invest in solid companies with a good business and a good cashflow, then you should continue to receive income. In the form of dividends, even if the share price dips. And there is always the possibility that the share price will have recovered or even improved by the time you decide to sell.



TO PROTECT investors against a 1929-style stock market crash, Brooks Macdonald Gayer is recommending the Close Escalator unit trusts from Close Fund Management.

The 100 fund provides complete capital protection if the market falls, while allowing investors to benefit from a portion of any rise in the FT-SE 100 index. The 95 fund gives greater exposure to stock market

gains while limiting losses to 5 per cent of capital. Unlike most guaranteed funds, there is no lock-in period and the funds are unit trusts and as such taxed as capital gains and not income. Minimum investment is £1,000, or £100 per month. Readers of *The Times* can buy the funds at a 2 per cent discount until March 20 through Brooks Macdonald Gayer (0171 499 6424).

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## Guinness Flight offers a frontier punt

For investors who don't have sleepless nights worrying where their money is going, the death this week of Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese leader, provides an excellent opportunity to get into the world's most exciting emerging market.

Helped by the free market reforms which Deng introduced in 1978, China has been repeating the extraordinary economic miracle of nearby Japan and Taiwan and is forecast to grow 10 per cent a year until the year 2000. With nearly a quarter of the world's population, the country is poised to become the economic superpower of the 21st century, in much the same way that the US

did in the 20th. The integration of Hong Kong in July is likely to turn out to be a reverse takeover in which the capitalist ethos of the tiny colony controls the giant hinterland beyond it. Certainly, that is the hope of Guinness Flight which today launches its Hong Kong and China unit trust. The company launched an offshore China fund a year ago which has achieved nearly 30 per cent growth for sterling investors.

Howard Flight, Guinness Flight managing director, says political uncertainty means Hong Kong and China are undervalued compared with the US and UK. With

Deng's successor, Jiang Zemin, still to consolidate his position and the handover of Hong Kong imminent, this uncertainty is bound to persist.

However, there are other reasons for giving China a wide berth. While its burgeoning middle class will become more vocal for political freedom, the army that perpetrated the Tiananmen Square massacre is still ready to back the Communist Party. Growing economic inequality is also causing enormous pressures in China's regions, with some pundits predicting a break-up of the country.

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\* SOURCE: ENDOWMENT FUND OFFER TO BUY WITH NET INCOME REINVESTED TO 31.12.96. OVER 5 YEARS PROLIFIC'S FAR EASTERN UNIT TRUST WAS 2ND QUARTILE, SPECIAL SITUATIONS UNIT TRUST WAS 3RD QUARTILE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIT TRUST WAS 1ST QUARTILE. 11,000 INVESTORS IN EACH ALSO WOULD BE WORTH £1,700, £1,100 AND £1,300 RESPECTIVELY. REGULAR SAVINGS OF £50 PER MONTH OVER 5 YEARS WOULD BE WORTH £2,400, £2,100 AND £2,300 RESPECTIVELY. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT PAST PERFORMANCE IS NOT NECESSARILY A GUIDE TO THE FUTURE. THE VALUE OF INVESTMENTS AND THE INCOME FROM THEM CAN GO DOWN AS WELL AS UP AND YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO GET BACK THE FULL AMOUNT ORIGINALLY INVESTED. EXCHANGED RATES MAY CAUSE THE VALUE OF UNDERLYING INVESTMENTS TO GO UP OR DOWN. THE TAX TREATMENT OF PEPs MAY BE ALTERED BY FUTURE LEGISLATION ISSUED BY PROLIFIC UNIT TRUST MANAGERS LIMITED. REGULATED BY THE PERSONAL INVESTMENT AUTHORITY AND A MEMBER OF AUTP. VERIFICATION APPLIES TO ALL LUMP SUM UNIT TRUST INVESTMENTS MADE BEFORE 11AM ON THURSDAY 18.12.97.

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Jul	850
Aug	900
Sep	950
Oct	1000
Nov	1050
Dec	1100
Jan	1150
Feb	700

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## INTERFACES

## Shares end off the day's lows

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>BANKS</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>BREWERY, PUBS &amp; REST</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>BUILDING &amp; CONSTRUCT</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>ELECTRICITY</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>ELECTRONIC &amp; ELECT</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>BUILDING MATERIALS</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>ENGINEERING</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>CHEMICALS</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>DISTRIBUTORS</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>ENGINEERING, VEHICLES</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>FOOD MANUFACTURERS</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>LEISURE &amp; HOTELS</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>MINING</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>PROPERTY</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>TELECOMMUNICATIONS</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>TEXTILES &amp; APPAREL</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>TRANSPORT</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>WATER</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>RETAILERS, FOOD</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>RETAILERS, GENERAL</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>SHORTS (under 5 years)</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>LONGS (over 15 years)</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>INDEX-LINKED (on projected inflation)</b>							
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00

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RUGBY UNION

# Northern lights have perfect chance to shine

By David Hands, Rugby Correspondent

THE Pilkington Cup has this season mirrored the FA Cup in that so many fancied teams have already left the scene. There is no Bath, no Wasps, no wealthy Richmond to worry about this weekend; rather, the real possibility of northern clubs occupying two, or even three, of the places in the semi-final draw on Monday.

That situation has not occurred for 20 years. In 1977 Waterloo and Gosforth reached the knockout competition's penultimate stage, Fylde failing to join them. A year earlier Gosforth, Sale and Wakefield made the last four and, coincidentally, all three are there again, even if traditionalists scoff at the thought that the Newcastle of today bears much relationship to the Gosforth of yesteryear.

Be that as it may, Newcastle have probably the best opportunity of carrying the northern banner a stage further, even though it is Leicester whom they must overcome. They are at home, they have 12 internationals from four countries available and they play a Leicester side weakened by the loss, through injury, of Eric Miller, Dean Richards and



Dawson: Lion-hearted

## Wakefield keen to step forward

David Hands on the upwardly-mobile aspirations of one of Yorkshire's finest

YORKSHIRE is not short of upwardly-mobile rugby clubs. With the arrival of professionalism, the ambition burns among the likes of Leeds, Morley and Harrogate in the third division of the Courage Clubs Championship, and in the second division, where Rotherham and Wakefield sit cheek by jowl.

Rotherham have arrived only recently at this status. Wakefield, by contrast, seem to have been trying to escape it for years, yet seem doomed to failure once more this season with the moneyed clubs occupying both the promotion and the play-off spots.

There is, of course, still the cup. Wakefield stand on the threshold of repeating their feat of 1976, when they reached the semi-finals of the old John Player Cup. Today, they play Gloucester at College Grove in a Pilkington Cup quarter-final and, were they to win, it would be the most timely of victories.

Early next week, Wakefield plan to announce the first stage of a development essential if they are to fight their way into the English game's upper echelon. They have the opportunity to move to a new ground, away from the restricting, and shared, confines of College Grove with its 4,000 capacity, where they can grow and attract sponsorship.

That Wakefield have always been so competitive is remarkable, given their small catchment area of 65,000 and the competition for players. "There are many firms who would be prepared to invest in us if we were on our own," Robin Foster, their vice-chairman, said.

When the Rugby Football Union's (RFU) moratorium on professionalism ended last May, Wakefield handed out contracts to players. "We rushed into signing our squad because we were in danger of

losing a number to our wealthier brethren," Foster said. Like many others, they believed that revenue would become available from television and sponsorship deals

— but, with the long-running dispute between the RFU and English Professional Rugby Union Clubs, it did not.

Wakefield's bacon was saved by the private investment of five former players, and though they lost three promising forwards to Leeds, they were able to attract three quality players from Orrell.

"We haven't worked our tails off for the last 20 years just to slide backwards," Foster said. "The desire to remain at the top is still there, to take one step further if we can, and it would be magic if, next week, we could publish our hopes for the future on the back of a win over Gloucester."

Wakefield's success this season has come through their back division, where the loyalty of Dave Scully and Mike Jackson at half back has served them well. Five of their players have appeared in the successful North under-21 team this season and one, Dean Hardcastle, was an England replacement in the under-21 international against Scotland last month.

"That's encouraging for us but we do need a bit of timber up front," Foster admitted. Yet his club will relish yet another high-profile cup game: this far they have beaten Waterloo and Moseley, fellow second-division clubs, so Gloucester gives added focus.

"The cup means a great deal to us because of our previous exploits, we have always enjoyed it," Foster said. Two years ago they beat Gloucester 19-9; a year ago Bath, Slough and all were 45 seconds away from an ignominious defeat; there are no guarantees for visitors to Wakefield.

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## Cardiff keep champagne on ice

Andrew Longmore finds ice hockey's champions short of a suitable stage

It says something for the confidence of Cardiff Devils and the savvy of their marketing staff that, within minutes of winning the inaugural ice hockey Superleague title, T-shirts celebrating the fact were on sale in the Wales national ice rink. For the Devils, a 6-4 victory over Manchester Storm, which brought them the championship with a game to spare, was a welcome return to winning ways. This was the club's fourth championship, but their first for two years. The wait was beginning to lay heavy on a club born only ten years ago but bred on success.

It was just a shame nobody brought the trophy along. For all the inevitable rendering of *We Are The Champions* and the wild scenes of celebration, the players had to make do with their standard issue bottles of Bud rather than supping champagne from a silver cup — an apt comment

SUPERLEAGUE										
Club	P	W	D	L	C	F	A	Pts	GD	Points per game
Cardiff	41	30	3	8	0	205	128	63	+77	1.54
Sheffield	40	28	4	10	2	182	138	58	+44	1.45
Nottingham	41	21	11	9	2	157	142	45	+15	1.10
Avon	40	18	8	15	0	156	152	44	+4	1.10
Newcastle	40	18	2	22	5	150	181	39	-31	0.98
Sunderland	40	13	13	14	1	143	153	39	-10	0.98
Bristol	40	13	2	25	1	136	195	28	-59	0.70
Birmingham	40	12	3	25	3	148	188	28	-40	0.70

of columns indicate games lost in overtime. Teams are awarded one point for each loss

on the first year of the Superleague, which has seen plenty of fizz and a fair amount of froth. The presentation of the trophy will take place tonight before the Devils' final game against Newcastle Cobras.

That the fall guys for the occasion should be Manchester Storm was appropriate — and not just because their coach, John Lawless, laid the foundations for the Devils' success in the early days. Lawless says ice hockey is "facility led". The Storm have the facility, in the 17,000-capacity Nymex Arena, but not the team. Cardiff beat the team, not the facility.

As the players and the head coach, Paul Heavey, moved steadily into a larger-induced haze during a long night of celebration in Greetky's Bar, thoughts would already have been turning to the future. The club's chief executive, David Temme, and Paul Guy, whose money has helped to bankroll this season's rising wage bill, were both away for the vital night.

When they return, the development of a new arena will be top of their agenda.

The Wales national ice rink is cosy and, when the mood takes the locals, raucous. It is sold out most weeks, but a capacity of 2,635 will not put food on the table for long, if other clubs match Cardiff by buying in a higher class of import. Heavey, at 34, one of the brightest young coaches in sport, has done his homework on players such as Ken Hodge and Marty Yewchuk, but money talks loudest and it will only be a matter of time before the greater clout of the Steelers in Sheffield and the Storm prevails. A new 10,000-seat facility in Cardiff Bay is planned, but the vision is still somewhat hazy.

In the meantime, the Devils can savour their suc-

cess and start preparations for the play-offs and, next season, another tilt in Europe. Last time, their run was halted abruptly by a team from Minsk in the semi-finals of the Europa Cup. This time, Heavey feels, his team are wiser and more battle-hardened.

"Our long-term goal is to win a European trophy and I think we're capable of doing that," he said. "This is a tough league. We used to have to raise our game to the highest level for maybe eight to ten games a season, now it's every week. We're looking at a standard comparable with the minor leagues in the US and players who don't make it in the National Hockey League are starting to look to Britain as an alternative."

The rougher, tougher type



Kip Noble leaps into Heavey's arms as Cardiff celebrate their championship

of player on their books has made Cardiff less than popular on occasions this season and has highlighted the head-on collision of the disciplinary code. Even Heavey, a defender of players in the mould of his fellow Scot, Alex Ferguson, admits that the administrative side of the Superleague has suffered from "a lot of teething problems". Certainly, raised standards on the ice have not been matched off it.

The Devils are deserved champions, though, and you only had to watch Shannon Hope, Cardiff's veteran defenceman, racing children round the rink and signing autographs until his hand ached in the aftermath of victory to sense how desperately this sport wants to succeed.

The rougher, tougher type

## GOLF: ELEMENTS PLAY TRICKS ON COMPETITORS IN PRESIDENT'S PUTTER

# Amateurs' best efforts blown awry

By John Hawkins, Golf Correspondent

FOR anyone in search of peace and tranquillity, the tee of the short 5th hole at Rye Golf Club was not the place to be on a doleful February day. Buffeted by 40mph winds, competitor after competitor in the President's Putter found the words that came to mind were not those inscribed on the wooden seat at the back of the tee — "From the Rugby International Golfing Society 1961" — but rather a modification of that famous hymn, "For those in peril on the sea".

The sides of the 5th green fall away. It has a ridge in it so that the right side is lower than the left and is set at an angle from the tee. In a south wind, the best line is well left, towards Cherbourg. Those attempting to play this hole on

such a day were reminded of Bernard Darwin's remark that "the most difficult shots in golf are the second shots to the short holes at Rye".

Though for many the green was unwelcoming and hostile, for Nick Burke it was the place of a minor triumph. His tee-shot finished to the left of the

Results from Rye — 51

green, down a bank 15 feet below the putting surface. It could scarcely have been in a worse place. From such a position, even the most gifted professional would have been pressed to keep his ball on the putting surface.

Burke chose to putt. He judged the steepness of the bank just struggled to the top

with its last turn and then was taken down on to the green by the contours of the surface. It rolled to within eight feet of the flag. Such skill was of no use in the end.

He was beaten 2 and 1 by Tim Hanson, who, in his morning match against Peter Cooper, had watched as Cooper's ball was blown several feet on the 5th green. "As he took his putter back the ball went with it," Hanson said. "I couldn't believe my eyes. I thought I was watching something out of David Copperfield."

After two victories, Ted Dexter's story of the 5th went like this: "I was on the high side of the green and my first putt started well left, turned and rolled down past the hole and on and on. I hit my second putt up the hill and it got to within six inches then began to trickle

back and it ended at my feet again." Tony Mudgey, Dexter's opponent, took up the story: "I was about to bend down and concede Ted's second putt when it started to move again. It ended up further away in three than he had been in two. In the end, we halved the hole in five."

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## ATHLETICS

# Rodal can judge form for run at Coe's time

By David Powell, Athletics Correspondent

AFTER staging a run of domestic meetings, in which British honour only has been at issue, the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham opens its doors to the world tomorrow. The venue is hosting the final event on the Ricoh Tour, which carries \$210,000 (about £130,000) in prize-money.

The tour is the indoor equivalent of the "golden four" outdoor series — four of the best meetings on the circuit working together with an attractive prize structure. Yet, more than that of any single British athlete, it is the performance of Ian Stewart that matters most this weekend.

This is the first opportunity that the British Athletic Federation has had to lift off the mask of embarrassment that it wore last year when its international meetings were not of the standard that the crowds in Great Britain have come to expect.

Stewart, as the head of the events department, needs a show of outstanding quality to help to convince the public that seats for the BAF's main promotions are still worth buying. The special effects display that the BAF is planning, through music and lighting, to jazz things up, will not, in itself, be enough.

Three Olympic champions dropping out in the past week have left Stewart with only one from an individual event. Gone are Charles Austin and Svetlana Kostadinova, the high jump gold medal-winners from Atlanta, together with Dean Hemmings, the 400-metre hurdler. In, though, is Vebjorn Rodal, whose last inclusion had Stewart buoyant yesterday.

Rodal set an Olympic record of 1min 42.55sec for 800 metres when, becoming Norway's first track field champion for 40 years in Atlanta last year, prompting a revision of the presumption that Wilson Kipketer would be the one to break Sebastian Coe's long-standing world record. Either could take it this summer and, to emphasise the point, Rodal will seek to lower the indoor record, held by Paul Ereng, tomorrow.

Ereng's record may not be of such old cloth as Coe's, but neither is it from the nearly new shop. Set in 1989, Ereng recorded 1min 44.84sec the year after winning the Olympic title in Seoul. Rodal has asked for a pacemaker to reach 600 metres in 77sec — 1min 43sec pace.

Pacemakers of quality are rare and, as of yesterday afternoon, Stewart has not found one who is ideal. He said yesterday: "We have got people, but finding one who can run that fast is not easy. I have got Peter Stubbs with me and he reckons he can do 78sec, but I am not so sure. Ideally, we need somebody who can run 77sec every day. Birmingham slipped from third to fifth in the International Amateur Athletic Federation indoor evaluations last year, but Stewart said of tomorrow: "It is going to be as good as anything we have put on indoors. The depth is tremendous. We have got Ivan Pedroso and five other [long] jumpers over eight metres this season. We have got probably the best 60 metres on the circuit this year. Big names could go out in the heats."

That event includes Ato Boldon, the Olympic 100 and 200 metres bronze medal-winner, from Trinidad, Bruny Surin, from Canada, who will be seeking his third successive 60 metres world title in Paris next month, and Jon Drummond and Dennis Mitchell, two of the fastest Americans.

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## SNOOKER

# Drago wins war of nerves

By Phil Yates

TONY DRAGO, a bundle of often uncontrolled nervous energy, made his debut in the semi-finals of a world ranking tournament a winning one by edging John Higgins, the title-holder, 6-5 in an enthralling contest at the International Open in Aberdeen yesterday.

Higgins, undefeated in five previous meetings with Drago and in 17 matches during an event that he was aiming to win for a third successive year, was confidently expected to protect his record on both counts, but did not play anywhere near his best.

Breaks of 57 and 106 gave Drago, from Malta, a 2-1 lead and he recovered from a 46-0 deficit in the eighth frame with a 67 clearance to brown to

move 5-3 ahead. Holding a 64-6 advantage at an advanced stage of the ninth frame, Drago had one foot and four toes in the final.

Drago squandered an opportunity to wrap up proceedings, however, and Higgins, who rallied from 6-0 down to pip him 9-8 in the last 16 of the United Kingdom championship three months ago, refused to relinquish his grip on the trophy.

Higgins made a 71 clearance to steal the frame on the black, and won a fraught tenth by clipping the pink to a top pocket. At that point, given Drago's propensity to crack in such circumstances, Higgins was rightly considered an overwhelming favourite, and

there was certainly no denying Drago's growing nervousness. Unable to sit still in his chair while Higgins was at the table, he resembled an expectant father pacing the maternity ward. Yet Drago retained his composure with a 59 break in the deciding frame to secure at least £32,000. "I knew I had guts, but not that much," Drago said. "I'm the happiest man in the world."

The elimination of Higgins afforded Stephen Hendry, the 5-2 quarter-final conqueror of Jimmy White on Thursday, the chance to further tighten his grip on top spot in the provisional world rankings.

SENILE: Tony Drago (right) vs John Higgins (left) at the International Open in Aberdeen yesterday. Drago (left) won 6-5. Semi-final: Drago (left) vs Higgins 6-5.

## HOCKEY

# Barrett homes in on Teddington repeat

CRICKET: PLAYERS RESPONDING TO MODERN GAME AND METHODS OF PREPARATION

# England dance to different tune

FROM ALAN LEE  
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT  
IN AUCKLAND

EVEN the most curmudgeonly of observers must concede that there is a strikingly noteworthy aspect of England's recent cricket. It is not just that they are winning games. It is that the players — including those of distinctly unathletic build and gait — look strong, fit and agile.

Already, one can sense a groan of scepticism from the armchairs of the traditionalists, where fitness regimes have never been well received. Cricketers, so they maintain, should get fit by playing cricket, just as they always used to do.

This edict, however, applied to another generation, virtually another game. The cricketers of today have so many more questions asked of mind and body than did their predecessors. Only they, three months into a tour covering two countries, know what it is to encounter a string of limited-overs games, with their excessive demands on physical well-being, at a time when mental energy and motivation are at a premium. They are doing so now, with a second

game of five scheduled for tomorrow at Eden Park.

England have been shamefully slow to recognise the needs of the modern game. This is the first tour on which two experts have catered for the players' physical welfare, but the belated acknowledgement is having its reward — visibly, in the case of unrecognisable fielding and catching standards, and less tangibly in the improved levels of stamina to concentrate through a taxing day.

Wayne Morton, the England physiotherapist, has been waging war on reactionary philosophies since he came into cricket 13 years ago. "To acquire fitness requires toughness, preparation and attitude," he said, "and in cricket there is a constant battle against long tradition and resistance. But I struggle far less with the players of today and more with the people who used to play."

"When I started out in cricket, the attitudes to fitness were antiquated. We still lag behind other countries, and because I am fighting a corner it seems to me that changes are not happening fast enough. To a traditionalist, it is probably moving too fast."

It was the idea of Morton, a Yorkshireman, to spread the workload by recruiting a specialist trainer. "Fitness in cricket had always been the province of the physio, but I increasingly found myself dragged in two directions and that we also needed a different input. I knew there was a role for a fitness expert — I just had to persuade the [Test and County Cricket] Board."

Morton won his point and Dean Riddle, ironically a New

Surrey jazz up Sundays — 1

Zealand, was recruited. Riddle had spent ten years training rugby league teams, the past seven in England, and has found little difficulty adapting his methods.

We spoke towards the end of the Christchurch Test. Riddle had just taken three of the unemployed players for a session of swimming and "water-based running". At close of play, others would be identified for shuttle runs on the outfield. Morton grinned mischievously: "Dean gets all the abuse from them now. I'm the good guy again."

"Cricketers are human and

training often seems an unpleasant thing to do. We cannot expect to impose concepts and change things overnight but, in a few years' time, every new player will accept these routines as the norm."

Morton and Riddle have devised some training games that, to an outsider, seem irrelevant, even infantile. Yet the noisy, hyperactive routines, one of them a kind of basketball played with a tennis ball, all have their purpose. "It is for agility, for the reflexes, for hand-eye co-ordination and for player communication," Riddle said.

"Equally, we may give them a game that has no special relevance other than to warm them up in a way they find interesting. Variety is the key — we constantly change the formulas to keep them thinking and so they don't know how much they are doing. It would be hard, for instance, to get a player to do 20 40-metre sprints straight off, but play football for half an hour and he will probably do 60."

Both men speak of diet, of energy levels and of their aim to create a national fitness database so that cricketers can constantly be assessed. But they relate to the players' own

vocabulary when Morton says: "There is an intensity and aggressiveness in Test cricket now and, when you come up against a very physical, powerful side like South Africa, it can be intimidating."

In this, he is getting through to the players and perhaps the mark of the fitness men's success on this tour has been the response of two unlikely candidates, Robert Croft and Philip Tufnell.

"Croft is a dumpy little Welshman," Morton said, "but he believes his fitness levels have made him stronger in his bowling, given him more presence at the crease. As for Tufnell, well, he'll never be Carl Lewis but he has reached well." Tufnell, indeed, has been going regularly to the gym without persuasion. His fielding has benefited enormously and the direct-hit run-outs he effected in the Christchurch Test was a sweet moment for his trainers.

While Morton, an integral part of this team and its culture, sees out the tour, Riddle has returned home. Already, however, he has signed a contract for the tour to West Indies next winter, which can only be good news for England's cricket.



Croft and Tufnell enjoy the success their improved levels of fitness has helped them to achieve

## Jury still out after Kray funds appeal

ASHFIELD 95, a football club from Kirkby in Nottinghamshire, has appointed a new president — Reggie Kray. Now 63 and jailed for 30 years for the murder of Jack "The Hat" McVitie and being accessory to the murder of George Cornell, Kray has contributed £1,000 to Ashfield 95.

He issued his first statement as president from Maidstone prison: "I am very pleased the team has honoured me in this way. I have always had a soft spot for Nottinghamshire since I spent a few years in Nottingham prison. The people are really friendly and Nottingham is my second favourite city after London."

For some reason, not every one is ecstatic about this appointment. Mick Kilbee, assistant secretary to the Nottinghamshire FA, said: "We have written to the club asking them to explain the situation in writing. Meanwhile, we are reserving judgment until we hear from them."

Ashfield wrote to Kray after a number of others had turned down their request for money, which they want to help them find a better ground. The Prince's Trust rejected them; Kray did not.

### Take five

The willow is covered in pussies and the song of the song thrush echoes through the land. Can the third sign of spring be far behind? No: this column's annual Wisden competition is with us once again. All you have to do is work out who the editor, Matthew Engel, has selected as the five Wisden cricketers of the year.

The Wisden award traditionally goes to the five players who have illuminated the English season of the previous summer: a player can only win it once. However, there is something rum going on this year. Engel dropped one of his subtle hints: "Remember that the selection of the cricketers, and even the criteria by which he selects them, are entirely a matter of the editor's judgment." Engel may have played a wild card this year.

A copy of Wisden 1997 goes to the five entries closest to Engel's selection: I am the sole judge of proximity. Entries must reach me by March 10.

### The biters bit

Bandits held up a car near Warsaw, in Poland, and were set to rob the occupants, Konstin Valgin and Gernady Remensky. But help was at hand. The two men are coaches to the biathlon teams of Russia and Belarus, and they were returning from the world championships in Slovakia.

Biathlon? Yes, the event that combines skiing and marksmanship — and the two teams were travelling behind. The four highwaymen found themselves surrounded by two dozen men armed with rifles. Wisely, they surrendered.

### Pulling together

As everyone knows, the world indoor tug-of-war championship is taking place this week at the Torbay Leisure Centre. Tug-of-war is one of the most ancient of all sports: there is a wall engraving of competing tug-of-warriors in an Egyptian tomb, dated at 2500 BC.

SIMON BARNES



On Saturday

England already has two gold medals at the championships and is fancied for two more today at the event, sponsored by Taylor Woodrow. The International Federation is making a quixotic attempt at getting the sport back into the Olympics. It was last contested in 1920. Britain won gold, silver and bronze in the tug-of-war in the 1908 London Olympics: the gold medal-winning team from the Metropolitan Police went back to work for the afternoon.

□ Marcos Martin, playing football for Sevilla against Tenerife last Sunday, was injured and taken off the field on a golf buggy. Alas, the driver drove rather too close to the goal — and whizzed Martin's head on a post as he whizzed past. He has since recovered from both injuries.



### Appealing Bell

Goalkeeper of the week is Joseph Antoine Bell of the Cameroon squads that contested the World Cup finals in 1990 and 1994. He has all but succeeded in getting paid for his participation in 1990.

Bell took the case to FIFA, who ordered the Cameroon FA to cough up the money he is owed. All the other members of the squad have long since given up the attempt at getting their money.

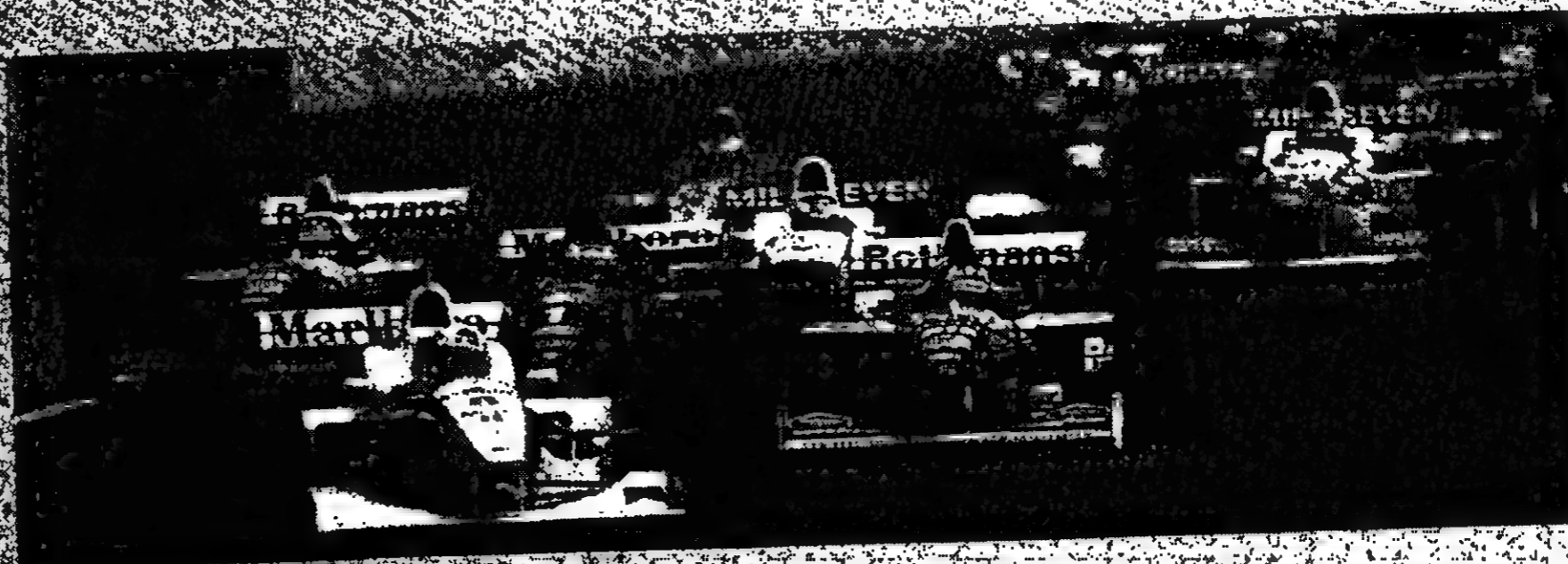
Bell did not actually play in 1990: he was dropped after a dispute with officials about when he was going to get paid. He played two games in 1994, but was dropped after his leading part in a threatened strike — about payment.

I wonder if he has been paid for the 1994 World Cup yet. FIFA said Cameroon would be suspended from international competition if they did not pay up. Vincent Onana, president of the Cameroon FA, said: "Cameroon cannot be suspended. Cameroon is credible, but to say that Bell will be paid as soon as possible is not comprehensive."

10p

THE TIMES

# ON MONDAY, A GUIDE TO THE LATEST TRAFFIC CONGESTION.



On Monday's 10p Times, see the free 20-page Grand Prix '97 guide. There's a preview of the new Formula 1 season, including a look at the teams, drivers and up and coming stars. There's also the chance to play fantasy formula 1 and win Michael Schumacher's pocket money — that's £25,000.

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CHANGING TIMES

هكذا من الامل

## THE TIMES GUIDE TO THE PREMIERSHIP THIS WEEKEND

**ARSENAL**  
How long can Arsène Wenger, the manager, continue in his strange state of denial? Obviously defending his players' excesses on the field has its own nemesis. The fact is that Arsenal's prospects this season in league and cup have been severely damaged by the rash of suspensions. Far better educated and more sophisticated than the average manager, it is surely in his own and Arsenal's interest for Wenger to come down heavily on offenders, rather than try to excuse them. BG

**ASTON VILLA**  
Thou shalt not make fun of the physiotherapist... as Mark Draper, the Villa midfielder player, has found to his cost. Draper thought that his past jesting with Jim Walker, the Villa Park spongerman, had been forgotten until he began his rehabilitation from a hernia operation. Running, running and then more running was prescribed for the breathless Draper, prompting him to muse: "I used to wonder why Jim never came in for a lot of banter. Now I know." RK

**BLACKBURN ROVERS**  
Robert Coar, the chairman, would surely prove useful to the Government in the information department. His assurances that Sven Göran Eriksson really was still coming to the club were just the latest. Ray Harford began to get edgy when Coar said he wasn't leaving, and big money was pumped on Alan Shearer joining Newcastle when Coar said that he was going nowhere. Coar even said that Eriksson wasn't a target, two days before he was named as the new manager. DM

**CHELSEA**  
Manchester United are probably too proud to man-mark Gianfranco Zola, which could give Chelsea a chance, and Mark Hughes will be keen to score against his old club. Roy Keane, in the United midfield, will be hard to contain on present form, but so too will Roberto di Matteo, who insists that he wants to stay in London. Where United may have the edge is in goal, where Schmeichel — as at Highbury in midweek — dominates but Chelsea tend to falter. BG

**COVENTRY CITY**  
Coventry versus Everton at Highfield Road this afternoon does not exactly whet the appetite. Only the most committed need attend a Premiership fixture of dubious potential. Still, the return of Dion Dublin from his seven-match suspension at least adds a smidgen of intrigue. Will Gordon Strachan, the Coventry manager, use Dublin in central defence, his recent role, or as a central striker, his preferred role? Peter Ndlovu, his often absent teammate, may be back, too. RK

**DERBY COUNTY**  
Jim Smith has learnt a few tricks during his years in management, and one is to know when to put the frighteners on his players. Having gone without a league win since November, Smith took them to a haunted house in Stratford-upon-Avon. "There were trapdoors everywhere, and some of the lads slept with the lights on," Gary Rowett, the central defender, said. The result? Four points from two games since, and much more spirit in the camp. RH

**EVERTON**  
With Mark Schwarzer turning them down, and Neville Southall looking to go into management, Everton are suddenly in need of a goalkeeper. And not just a goalkeeper. "We've done the hard part in weeding out the squad," Joe Royle, the manager, said, "but we want to bring in two, or maybe three, top-class players." Today they await a fitness test on Duncan Ferguson, who has a hamstring problem, and Craig Short. Marc Hottiger is out, with Michael Ball coming into the squad. PB

**LEEDS UNITED**  
After conceding seven goals in two games, it is back to the drawing board for George Graham, the manager, as Leeds visit Sunderland, a club with a defensive record to make Graham envious. Graham is trying with the idea of abandoning the wing-back formation, and reverting to the tried and tested "Manchester United and Blackburn have won the championship playing 4-4-2," Graham said, "and United still are, so it looks as if all the successful teams play 4-4-2." PB

**LEICESTER CITY**  
Back to square one. After restoring the balance of his side by signing Robert Ullathorne, a left-sided midfielder player, on Monday, Martin O'Neill, the manager, could only reflect on the game's crucifixion when Ullathorne broke an ankle 11 minutes into his debut against Wimbledon 24 hours later. He is out for the season, and with Whitlow still missing, there will be a distinctly right-footed look to the side against Derby County today. Heskey, Izet, Lennon, and Elliott are all suspended. RH

**LIVERPOOL**  
Stash Collymore has scored on his last five starts, but no one at Liverpool is apparently closer to understanding his complex character. Collymore did not train yesterday, complaining of feeling poorly, but at least he did turn up. While there are many unanswered questions about the club's most expensive signing, there is no doubt he has great talent. "He could become one of the best players in this country, possibly in Europe, if he gets his mind right," John Barnes said yesterday. DM

**MANCHESTER UNITED**  
After the bitter encounter at Highbury, United were still counting their bruises yesterday. "There are a few bruises and strains which we have to check on," Alex Ferguson, the manager, said, "but Pally [Gary Pallister] is the only concern." If he is ruled out, David May will step back in. Nicky Butt is out for up to six weeks, and Eric Cantona is still suspended, leaving Cole and Solskjær to continue the partnership that was so effective against Arsenal. PB

**MIDDLESBROUGH**  
Bryan Robson, the manager, is close to completing the £1.25 million signing of Mark Schwarzer, Bradford City's 24-year-old Australian goalkeeper. Schwarzer has played just 16 games for Bradford since arriving from Kaiserslautern, of Germany, for £350,000 in November. Meanwhile Juninho faces Newcastle in the Test-Tyne derby at the Riverside today before flying out to Brazil for an international against Poland next week. Emerson is suspended, while Whyte is injured.

**NEWCASTLE UNITED**  
He is described as Mr. Miserable, but Kenny Dalglish, the manager, can display a cutting humour. Asked yesterday if he thought the Premiership contest is now a two-horse race, his response was telling. "Who else is in it with us?" he smiled. He will soon have Newcastle winning consistently, and if they should record victory in the match they have in hand over the top two clubs, then they would be only five points adrift. It is a significant gap, but not impossible to bridge. DM

**NOTTINGHAM FOREST**  
With Stuart Pearce scowling menacingly around the City Ground corridors since the FA Cup ignominy at Chesterfield, there seems little chance of a repeat performance when Forest resume league duties against Aston Villa today. Better times appear to be ahead for the manager. The takeover should be resolved — not before time — on Monday night, while Steve Stone takes the next step in his recovery from a long-term knee injury when he begins jogging later in the week. RH

**SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY**  
David Pleat, the manager, was not a happy man this week, despite a rather important FA Cup victory at Bradford. It was Chris Waddle, a former player, who raised his hackles, with comments comparing Wednesday to Wimbledon. "Obviously whoever said that doesn't know too much about football," he said. "We have a different system, so it is a ridiculous comparison. Maybe it was a compliment, because Wimbledon are passing the ball around well, just like us." DM

**SUNDERLAND**  
The encounter with Leeds today at Roker Park evokes memories of the 1973 FA Cup Final, which Sunderland won 1-0, courtesy of Ian Porterfield's goal and Jim Montgomery's superb double save. The latest temporary newcomers at Sunderland are two Danes, Rens Pedersen and Kim Helander. While Sam Alston, the promising young winger, is gaining match practice on loan at Chester, Peter Reid, the manager, is casting covetous eyes at Grimaby's teenage left winger, John Ostrer.

## HOW THEY STAND

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Points
1. Manchester United	26	13	2	11	33	23	+10	41
2. Liverpool	26	12	3	11	32	28	+4	39
3. Arsenal	27	11	4	12	30	27	+3	37
4. Newcastle	25	11	4	10	28	20	+8	37
5. Aston Villa	26	10	5	11	26	24	+2	35
6. Chelsea	24	11	4	9	24	15	+9	35
7. Wimbledon	23	9	8	6	23	18	+5	35
8. Sheffield Wednesday	25	9	7	9	26	26	0	34
9. Tottenham	25	9	6	10	25	24	+1	33
10. Everton	25	8	7	10	23	24	-1	31
11. Leeds	26	8	7	11	28	30	-2	31
12. Derby	26	7	8	11	24	28	-4	29
13. Southampton	25	7	7	11	22	29	-7	28
14. Blackburn	24	7	7	10	21	27	-6	28
15. Leicester	24	7	6	11	20	27	-7	27
16. Coventry	26	7	5	14	22	31	-9	26
17. Nottingham Forest	25	6	7	12	20	28	-8	25
18. West Ham	26	6	6	14	22	31	-9	24
19. Southampton	25	6	5	14	20	28	-8	23
20. Middlesbrough	24	5	7	12	19	24	-5	22

## WEST HAM UNITED

If only points were as easy to accumulate as pounds. Inside 24 hours West Ham have raised £1.6 million through a share issue that values the club at £50 million, and "saved" £1.5 million on the purchase of John Harrison. "We only paid £3.5 million," Harry Redknapp, the manager, said. The customary add-ons are such that, for the deal to be worth the reported £5 million, "we would have to win the Champions League next year and I would have to score the winning goal." KP

**WIMBLEDON**  
The Football Association of Ireland are still taking the "Dublin Dons" stories seriously enough to secure the backing of FIFA and UEFA for their opposition to the plan. In the real world, a Wimbledon victory at Arsenal tomorrow, where they are unbeaten in eight visits, would make them outright leaders of the capital's unofficial championship, based on games between London clubs rather than league position. Neither they nor their opponents have lost a derby this season. NS

**SOUTHAMPTON**  
Benadi is suspended, Matthew Oakley is doubtful, and bids by Graeme Souness, the manager, for Carl Serrant, the Oldham Athletic left back, and Steve Harkness, the Liverpool defender, have been turned down. Looking on the bright side, Southampton have games in hand on their rivals at the foot of the Premiership. Ray Clemence has joined the club as part-time goalkeeping adviser. Jason Dodd could return, and a certain England international may feel he has a point to prove. NS

**TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR**  
Tony Lenaghan, Tottenham's overworked and presumably underpaid physiotherapist, has been receiving assistance from an unlikely source in recent weeks. Two health experts from Holland were airlifted in to the club's Chigwell training ground to help nurse the walking and hobbling, wounded back to fitness. "It got a bit too much for Tony and his staff," Gerry Francis, the Tottenham manager, said. "He needed a few extra hands and the Dutch guys have done a good job." RK

**CHELSEA v MANCHESTER UNITED**  
TICKETS: Sold out  
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-2, 1-0, 3-2, 1-3, 1-0, 2-3, 1-4

**HOW THEY LINE UP**  
CHELSEA (from): K. Hitchcock, F. Grodz, D. Petrescu, E. Newton, F. Leboeuf, E. Johnson, F. Sinclair, S. Clarke, A. Myers, R. di Matteo, S. Minto, J. Morris, R. Gullit, D. Wise, P. Hughes, M. Nichols, G. Zola, G. Vialli, M. Hughes.

MANCHESTER UNITED (from): P. Schmeichel, G. Neville, G. Pallister, R. Johnson, D. Irwin, K. Poborsky, D. Beckham, R. Keane, R. Giggs, A. Cole, O. G. Solskjær, P. Neville, G. May, B. McClair, J. Cruyff, R. van der Grint.

**COVENTRY CITY v EVERTON**  
TICKETS: Seats available  
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-2, 0-1, 2-0, 2-1, 0-1, 2-1, 0-0, 2-1

**HOW THEY LINE UP**  
COVENTRY CITY (from): S. Crichton, R. Shaw, G. Brown, P. Williams, M. Hall, P. Taylor, K. Richardson, E. Jess, G. McAllister, M. Whelan, D. Huckerby, D. Dublin, P. Ndlovu, B. Bonrows, A. Erturk, G. Stachan, W. Boland, J. Fife.

EVERTON (from): P. Gerrard, E. Barnett, T. Phelan, D. Unsworth, D. Watson, C. Short, G. Stuart, G. Speed, N. Barry, G. Allan, M. Branch, D. Ferguson, C. Thompson, N. Southall, P. Fife, M. Ball.

**LEICESTER CITY v DERBY COUNTY**  
TICKETS: Seats available  
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-2, 3-2, 3-3, 0-0

**HOW THEY LINE UP**  
LEICESTER CITY (from): K. Koller, J. Lawrence, S. Prior, S. Grayson, F. Pelling, J. Wells, S. Walsh, S. Taylor, S. Campbell, S. Wilson, J. Marshall, M. Roberts, S. Clatridge, K. Poole.

DERBY COUNTY (from): R. Hoult, G. Rowell, P. McGrath, I. Smitac, L. Casley, P. Trolove, C. Powell, C. Dooly, A. Asanovic, D. Sturridge, A. Ward, P. Simpson, S. Flynn, J. Laurson, M. Taylor, M. Fleishberg.

**LIVERPOOL v BLACKBURN ROVERS**  
TICKETS: Sold out  
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-2, 0-1, 2-1, 3-0

**HOW THEY LINE UP**  
LIVERPOOL (from): D. James, D. Matteo, S. Birmeyre, J. McAlister, M. Wright, N. Ruddock, P. Babo, J. Barnes, S. McManaman, M. Thomas, J. Redknapp, S. Collymore, R. Fowler, J. Carragher, M. Kennedy, A. Warner, P. Slinger, S. Kwana.

BLACKBURN ROVERS (from): T. Flowers, H. Berg, J. Kenna, C. Hendry, G. La Saux, T. Sherwood, G. Pizarro, W. McKinlay, J. Wilcock, C. Sutton, K. Gallacher, G. Doris, S. Giver, P. Watt, L. Bohner, N. Gudmundsson, M. Marner, G. Croft, P. Pedersen.

**MIDDLESBROUGH v NEWCASTLE UNITED**  
TICKETS: Sold out  
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-1, 4-1, 3-0, 3-0, 1-2

**HOW THEY LINE UP**  
MIDDLESBROUGH (from): B. Roberts, N. Cox, S. Vickers, G. Festa, C. Fleming, C. Higgin, P. Stamp, R. Matus, A. Moore, P. Ravenhill, J. Marino, M. Beck.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (from): S. Heslop, W. Berton, J. Berastford, D. Batty, D. Peacock, R. Lee, P. Beardsley, A. Shearer, L. Ferdinand, F. Asprilla, R. Elliot, D. Girdle, K. Gillespie, S. Watson, L. Clark, P. Albert.

**NOTTINGHAM FOREST v ASTON VILLA**  
TICKETS: Seats available  
10-YEAR RECORD: 0-0, 1-1, 1-2, 2-0, 0-1, 1-2, 1-1

**HOW THEY LINE UP**  
NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): M. Crossley, A. Falls, D. Lytle, A. Hazzard, C. Cooper, S. Crichton, D. Preece, C. Best, W. Wilson, S. Gerrard, C. Allen, J. Wain, K. Campbell, D. Saunders, P. McGregor, B. Roy, V. Warner, S. Birtwhistle.

ASTON VILLA (from): M. Boscán, F. Nelson, A. Wright, U. Ebiogu, S. Stanton, G. Southgate, J. Taylor, M. Draper, A. Townsend, D. Yorke, S. Micklethwait, Substitutes: T. Johnson, J. Joachim, C. Tiler, R. Scimeca, M. Oakes.

**SOUTHAMPTON v SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY**  
TICKETS: Sold out  
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-1, 1-2, 2-2, 0-1, 1-2, 1-1, 0-0, 0-1

**HOW THEY LINE UP**  
SOUTHAMPTON (from): M. Taylor, R. Maddison, K. Monk, R. Dryden, E. Bestwood, A. Nelson, J. Magilton, J. Dodd, S. Christian, M. Le Tissier, E. O'Brien, S. Bestwood, M. Oakley, D. Bassett, D. Hughes, R. Slater, U. van Gobbel.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (from): K. Freeman, S. Nixon, I. Nislin, D. Walker, J. Newson, P. Atkinson, M. Pemberton, W. Collins, R. Humphreys, B. Corbana, A. Booth, D. Hirst, R. Binkley, M. Clarke, D. Stellanow, O. Donaldson, L. Briscoe.

**SUNDERLAND v LEEDS UNITED**  
TICKETS: Sold out  
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-2, 0-1, 0-1

**HOW THEY LINE UP**  
SUNDERLAND (from): L. Perez, D. Kubicki, G. Hall, M. Scott, P. Brown, K. Ball, A. McVie, G. Ord, S. Agnew, D. Kelly, C. Russell, M. Gray, M. Bridges, M. Smith, A. Rice, J. Mullin, J. Elinson, D. Williams, P. Hedderley.

LEEDS UNITED (from): M. Marlyn, G. Kelly, A. Dorogi, C. Palmer, L. Reddo, G. Hall, R. Molinar, L. Bouyer, M. Jackson, B. Deane, R. Wallace, A. Yabosh, I. Rush, I. Harte, D. Wetherill, M. Beane.

**LEADING SCORERS**  
20: A. Shearer (Newcastle), 17: I. Wright (Arsenal), 14: D. Yorke (Aston Villa), 13: R. Fowler (Liverpool), 12: O. G. Solskjær (Manchester United), L. Ferdinand (Newcastle United), 10: C. Sutton (Blackburn), S. Collymore (Liverpool), F. Benavoli (Middlesbrough), M. Le Tissier (Southampton), S. B. Skov (Wimbledon), G. Vialli (Chelsea), D. Dublin (Coventry), E. Cantona (Manchester United), M. Gayle (Wimbledon)

**CHAMPIONSHIP BETTING**  
8-1: Manchester United; 11-4: Liverpool; 6-1: Newcastle United; 10-1: Arsenal; 14-1: Chelsea; 40-1: Aston Villa; 50-1: Wimbledon  
Odds supplied by Ladbrokes

The official internet site of the FA Premier League is at <http://www.fapremier.com>

**ARSENAL v WIMBLEDON**  
TICKETS: Sold out  
10-YEAR RECORD: 2-1, 3-0, 2-2, 0-0, 2-2, 1-1, 0-1, 1-1, 0-0, 1-3

**HOW THEY LINE UP**  
ARSENAL (from): J. Lull, L. Dixon, A. Adams, P. Vialli, M. Wright, S. Bold, N. Winstanley, R. Parfitt, P. Nicolson, D. Bergkamp, I. Wright, M. Rice, R. Garcia, S. Marshall, S. Monaco, L. Harper, P. Shaw, S. Hughes, A. Clarke, G. McDowall.

WIMBLEDON (from): N. Sullivan, K. Cunningham, A. Kinnle, D. Blackwell, C. Parry, Y. Jones, O. Lechardson, R. Earle, E. Ebo, M. Gayle, J. Goodman, D. Holdsworth, M. Ardley, M. Harford, D. Jupp, S. McAllister, G. Murphy.

**WEST HAM UNITED v TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR**  
TICKETS: Seats available  
10-YEAR RECORD: 2-1, 0-1, 0-2, 1-1, 1-1, 1-3, 1-2, 1-1

**HOW THEY LINE UP**  
WEST HAM UNITED (from): L. Mulvey, T. Brasher, S. Potts, M. Tappin, K. Rowland, J. Dicks, R. Ferdinand, D. Widdowson, J. Harrison, P. Gibson, I. Bishop, H. Porfiro, I. Dowle, F. Lampard, L. Soley, M. Bowen, S. Ledwith.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (from): J. Walker, S. Campbell, C. Caldwell, C. Wilson, D. Howells, D. Anderton, R. Fox, E. Sheringham, A. Sinton, R. Rosenthal, S. Carr, J. Edinburg, E. Beardsley, A. Nielsen, D. Hill, R. Allen, J. Scales, D. Austin.

**WHEN TO WATCH ON TELEVISION**

Today:  
BBC1: 10.50pm Match of the Day

Tomorrow:  
11am Sky Sports Goals on Sunday  
4pm Sky Sports Arsenal v Wimbledon (live)  
7pm Sky Sports West Ham United v Tottenham Hotspur (live)

Winning means survival for the little big club that dare not lose

# Hamman passionate about his gang

SAM HAMMAN

THE FACE OF FOOTBALL



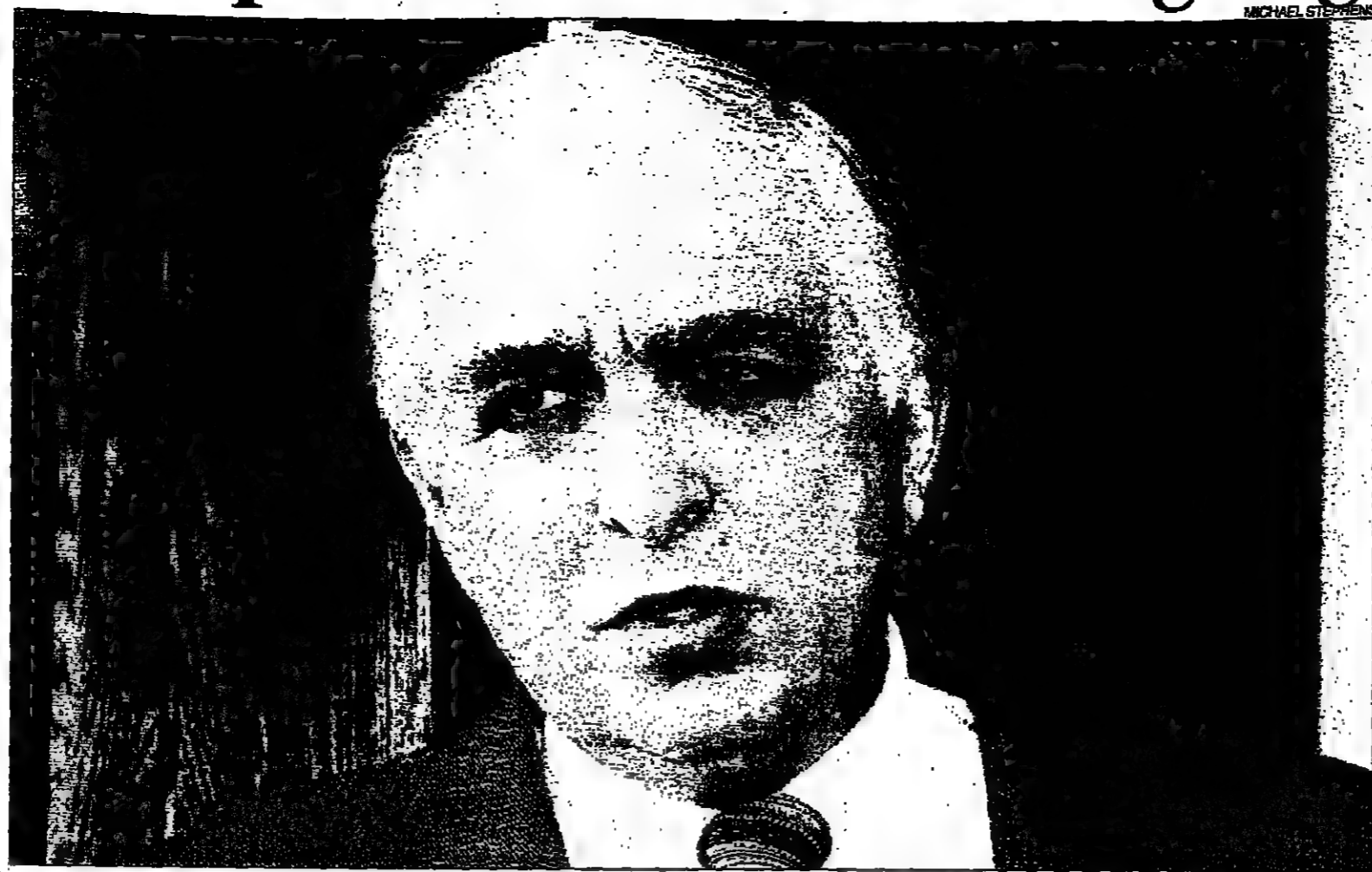
By Rob Hughes

It is not lost on Sam Hamman that the little club that he owns and runs, Wimbledon, is the north London giant, tomorrow. Which is the superior force in the capital?

They come from opposite ends of the FA Cup Premier League's fair play league, with Wimbledon in unaccustomed position near the top, and Arsenal bottom. Wimbledon, with a third of Arsenal's support at very best, have three times the opportunities to reach European competition at the end of this season ... and Hamman, a Lebanese, a Christian and a refugee from civil war, is elated at the status of his club. He will tell you a dozen times in half an hour that nobody — nobody — has better cover in their squad than Wimbledon FC. "We could put one of two teams out at Highbury tomorrow," he enthuses, "and both of them would give Arsenal a game."

Hamman's enthusiasm, his torrent of words, his almost evangelical crusade for Wimbledon is like Vesuvius; there is energy and combustion to spare.

And yet, when he pauses at his Regent Park home for reflection, Hamman, the businessman who has sold construction ideas throughout the Middle East, admits that he has fear, almost loathing, for the new money that is turning football into an unrecognisable business scrum. "Once we are directors answering to shareholders and to the City, then we have transformed our-



Hamman, who bought Wimbledon on a whim and made it a phenomenal success, says the club's rise stands as a ray of hope to others

selves from a football club to a commodity," he reasoned.

He bought into this club, soon bought a majority, on an impulse, when his wife came to England to give birth to their daughter at St Theresa's Hospital, in Wimbledon. It was not, he insists, an investment; he knew next to nothing about the club, about football or the business that it might become. "It is one of those things that you do when you travel," he recalls. "You buy a vase, you fall in love with a girl, you buy her things you should not."

What has become of that young man's fancy, and the 19-year journey of Wimbledon from Southern League semi-professionalism? "We are in the top five in England for consistency over the last ten years," he beams. "There is Liverpool, Arsenal, Manchester United and Everton

... and they are only ahead of us by a nose."

"So what are we to football? The other clubs, from the biggest to the smallest, look at what we have achieved and what we maintain, and we represent hope — capital letters H O P E."

In the rare instances when he pauses, one's eye strays to the antique books, the exquisite furnishings, the swords and daggers in the living room. "My background is from an academic family," he observes. "I come from Dhawshirah, 3,000 feet high in the mountains. We could look towards Syria or to the sea."

Now, with his three children resident in the United States, he is Sam the Wimbledon Man. He will tell you he knows little more today than when he started about the offside law, about football

tactics. That is for his remarkable coach, his creator of silk purses out of sows ears, Joe Kinners. Hamman will talk of the family, with himself as "both mother and father." He wants you to feel in your heart and your stomach what Wimbledon is about, because Hamman acknowledges that it cannot be rationalised in logical terms.

If pressed, he will admit to the coarse, abrasive, even ugly aspects of which he and the team dubbed the Crazy Gang. He will not apologise, not for Vinnie Jones, not for the scrawling on the walls of the West Ham United dressing-room. Wimbledon, he repeats, is family, and nobody touches his family.

Thus, if Jones has stepped out of order, Hamman will sort him out, though in public he will defend the player. He

defends, too, any probing questions about who subsidises the almost £2 million per annum losses of the club, with the answer, "It's family." In other words, it is in-house business.

But, provoked, he will say: "I do not accept from anyone how to set the standards of behaviour. If the FA charge Joe Kinners, do you think Joe Kinners pays his fine? I pay his fine, it is made up in the salary, tax included."

He talks of each of the managers who have passed through his Wimbledon odyssey, specifying what they gave to the club, what loyalty he still reciprocates to them. Noting that Bobby Gould has been under recent criticism as manager of Wales, the combative Hamman says: "We have debts at Wimbledon because Bobby succeeded in buying a good number of players, some

of whom we eventually sold to rebuild our team. With the money for Keith Curle, we bought six players — Robbie Earle, Dean Holdsworth, the marvellous Marcus Gayle, Warren Barton, Alan Kimble and Jones."

Hamman is clutching a fat brown file, its pages are daubed with yellow highlighter, noting the youth players in other clubs' reserves that he might like to buy, investments for the future of the little big club that Hamman says wins because it dare not lose.

"Wimbledon cannot go down," he confides. If we do, we lose £2 million a year, but maybe £7 million, because we lose the television money. We are winners because that is our only survival, our hope. Right now we are flavour of the day, as soon as things turn you will see how the dogs come out."

## Oldham put Warnock in charge of salvage operation

NEIL WARNOCK and Andy Ritchie were yesterday confirmed as the new management team of Oldham Athletic. Warnock, the former Plymouth Argyle, Huddersfield Town and Notts County manager, has been given until the end of the season to save the club from relegation.

Oldham are bottom of the Nationwide League first division and today face Bradford City, who are one place above them. Ritchie is returning to the club where he enjoyed the best spell of his playing career.

"We have nine home games left and I hope we can put together a good run," Warnock, who was sacked by Plymouth at the beginning of the month, said. "I've come here until the end of the season, I am hoping to impress the chairman but it's a two-way thing. I hope Oldham impress me as well."

Bobby Robson's future as manager of Barcelona looked more certain yesterday — despite another defeat. A 2-0 reverse at Real Sociedad on Thursday meant that Robson's team missed out on a chance to close the gap on Real Madrid, the league leaders, and increased the pressure from supporters.

However, Josep Luis Nuñez, the president said: "Despite the criticism of the coach, Barcelona remains the best team and I want Robson to see out this season and the next one as well."

Garry Parker, the Leicester City midfielder, is prepared to make a last-minute journey from his wife's hospital bedside to play against Derby County at Filbert Street.

Parker's wife, Petra, went into labour four months prematurely earlier this week and doctors are trying to save the baby. Martin O'Neill, the Leicester manager, said: "Garry is hoping everything is alright at the hospital and that he will be okay to play. He knows he has until the last minute before making his decision."

Talks on the future of Brighton were postponed for a second time yesterday.

## RUGBY LEAGUE Branson looking for early success

By Christopher Irvine

ALTHOUGH virgins in business terms, in rugby league terms, London Broncos are no pushovers. Richard Branson is due at the newest corner of his empire and will deem his 15 per cent stake in the club particularly worthwhile. If Bradford Bulls are beaten in the televised Silk Cut Challenge Cup fifth-round tie today, it was a tremendous effort last season by London to finish in the top four of the Super League. The backbone of that side remains, but the Broncos have brought with them from their Queensland training camp a fresh crop of young Australians, including Josh White, the former Illawarra scrum half, of whom much is expected alongside Tuisen Toller, the Great Britain international.

Until a much-vaunted youth system begins to percolate through to the first XIII the Broncos must rely on imported talent. As outrageous as his claim about the Broncos being the world force in three or four years sounded, Barry Maranta, like Branson, gets results. Before he bought the London club, Maranta helped make Brisbane Broncos the biggest sporting organisation in Australia.

At the redeveloped Stoop Memorial ground, there is the chance to put down roots and tap into the potentially big audience that Maranta and Branson are convinced exists. A winning side is imperative, and if London could reach the final at Wembley, on May 3, they really will have arrived.

However, the instantly recognisable player to watchers of Harlequins, who the Broncos hope to convert in their tenancy agreement with the rugby union club, is Robbie Paul, the Bradford captain. After his recent short spell with Harlequins, Paul is more familiar with the tightly-packed ground than the Broncos players.

Paul, 21, already has a place in Challenge Cup history as the player who scored three tries and was on the losing side in the classic final against St Helens last year. If they find some way of stifling his mercurial talents, London can cause an upset. The Bulls had the edge last year in two close encounters.

Iestyn Harris, the Wales and Britain back, who has not played in their league, so they must now be the favourites for the Vase.

In the other Vase quarter-finals, it is Taunton Town to try where Tiverton Town failed and win on Northern League territory at Guisborough Town. Bedlington Terriers, the Northern League's third representatives, travel to North Ferriby United and Northwood Town meet Banstead Athletic in an all-Icicle League confrontation.

The former Wales striker, Malcolm Allen, has joined Stevenage Borough, the Vauxhall Conference champions, and travels with their squad for the game at St Albans tomorrow.

Lee Briers, 19, takes over the scrum half and place-kicking responsibilities from the suspended Bobbie Goulding for St Helens, at home to Hull.

## Le Tissier stands by his Italian job

Matthew Le Tissier has spoken for the first time about his disappointment in England's defeat by Italy in their World Cup qualifying match and about the criticism heaped upon him afterwards.

"I knew that if we didn't win, then no matter how well I played, the story would be that I was because Hoddie took a gamble by picking Le Tissier," he said. "If the header I had in the first half had gone in, the headlines would have been very different. But I'm not surprised by the reaction, as the press have been waiting for a while for a chance to have a go at me and now they've taken it."

Le Tissier, who will be playing for Southampton against Sheffield Wednesday

## Dominique Baldy hears the England striker reject criticism of his role

today, said that the England coach, Glenn Hoddie, did not hold him responsible for England's failure. "I've spoken to Glenn on the phone since the game and he told me that, watching the video of the match since, he thought I looked the player most likely to score and that he now feels he should have kept me on a little longer."

In Le Tissier's view, the new coach to the Italy team, Cesare Maldini, has rejuvenated a side demoralised by the tactics of his predecessor, Arrigo Sacchi, and it was hardly coincidental that, confronted by a reorganised Italian de-

fence right on top of his game, none of England's attacking players enjoyed a night to remember.

"Why can't we just acknowledge the fact that the Italians are a very good team? Le Tissier asked. "People forget they were only knocked out of the European championship early because the coach at the time messed about with the side so much." Le Tissier is, perhaps, more angered by what he considers a distortion of the facts surrounding allegations that his brother, Carl, was responsible for leaking Hoddie's team in advance. "That's been completely

## Keelan plans Wembley return

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL BY WALTER GAMMIE

KEYAN KEELAN will be urging his Mossley team to throw every last ounce of effort into the FA Carlsberg Vase quarter-final at Whitby Town today and so bring the prospect of appearing at Wembley the step and a hop of a two-legged semi-final away.

Keelan went to Wembley as a player when Mossley reached the 1980 FA Trophy final and again as a coach with Witton Albion when they played Colchester United in the 1992 Trophy final. His enthusiasm remains undimmed by memories of a 2-1 defeat for Mossley — "I had a header in the last minute from a yard out. The ground was particularly hard that year and I headed it down and it

went over the bar," — and a 3-1 defeat for Witton.

"I think if you've been there once, the craving is stronger than if you've never been there," Keelan said. He knows, however, that it will take something out of the ordinary for the players to follow their manager, now 44, out at Wembley on May 10.

Whitby Town are formidable opponents. They have already hit the headlines by reaching the FA Cup first round, before going out 8-4 after extra time in a replay to Hull City, and are having a fine season in the Northern League. "I've seen them play and they are a very strong side," Keelan said. "They beat Tiverton in the last round,

who had won every game they'd played in their league, so they must now be the favourites for the Vase."

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## IN BRIEF

### Ashes series pulls in the crowds

INTEREST in the visit by the Australia cricket team this summer has reached unprecedented levels, despite England having not come close to winning the Ashes for a decade (Simon Wilde writes). Demand for tickets at the six Test matches and three Texaco Trophy matches has been strong since November and has little to do with England's successes in New Zealand.

Most Test grounds are reporting higher than usual demand for this time of year, though seats are still available for all matches outside the capital.

Shaun Young, the Australian all-rounder, was yesterday named as Gloucestershire's overseas player for the coming season. He will replace Courtney Walsh.

Football: England face a tough task to qualify for the 1998 women's World Cup finals in the United States. England have been drawn in a group with the 1995 champions, Norway, beaten finalists, Germany, and Holland.

Swimming: Jaime King, the British Olympic swimmer, yesterday reached the final of the 50-metre breaststroke with a time of 34.91 seconds at the Leeds Multi Nations Gala.

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## RACKETS

QUEEN'S CUP: Lucasta Smith defeated double champion: Quarter-final: L. Cookson and J. Carter 15-12, 15-12; Semi-final: M. Hennes 15-14, 15-7, 15-7; Final: A. Robinson and A. de la Cruz 15-12, 15-12, 15-12.

## BIKING

DAIRFIELD-HATTINGHAM: Clammy World Cup event: Super-sprint final: 1. A. Alford (Irish) 15:56.2, 2. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 3. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 4. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 5. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 6. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 7. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 8. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 9. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 10. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2.

## TENNIS

SANITOURNE: LTA men's indoor satellite tournament: Clammy World Cup event: Super-sprint final: 1. A. Alford (Irish) 15:56.2, 2. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 3. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 4. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 5. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 6. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 7. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 8. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 9. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2, 10. J. C. C. (Irish) 15:56.2.

## SQUASH

ANTWERP: Euro Open Final round: 15-16,

مركزاً من رصاص



**RACING 46, 47**  
**Nicholson deals up strong hand for Racing Post Chase**

# SPORT

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22 1997

**RUGBY UNION 46**

**Dawson returns to centre stage in Pilkington Cup**



## Shake hands for good of the game

**Rob Hughes, football correspondent, on why Wright and Schmeichel must bury the hatchet in a public reconciliation**

FOR the better part of an hour at Highbury on Wednesday, football was enriched by a spectacle of ball-control beyond anyone's expectations in gale-force conditions. By the end of the night, that enrichment was contaminated by irresponsible behaviour by Ian Wright; and from then until today, instead of just a game, the affair has disintegrated into a question of racism that, in the present climate of the country, is dangerous beyond the emotions of sport.

Wright appeared on television on Thursday night to disclaim any culpability. "I did nothing wrong," he insisted. "He [Peter Schmeichel, the Manchester United goalkeeper, whose leg might have been broken by Wright's horrendous two-footed tackle] is my fellow pro and I'm not going to say I want anything to happen to him."

So, the Arsenal idol, Wright, insists that he made no complaint about an alleged racist remark

from Schmeichel when they last met and rowed in public at Old Trafford in November, insists that nothing untoward happened in the tunnel at the end of the Premiership game on Wednesday. The television pictures, the still photographs — showing not only the destructive nature of Wright's tackle, but the bitter dislike of these two professional performers for one another — and the evidence of police intervention in the tunnel are, then, all bogus.

This is a sickening ramification of bad blood that has festered between United and Arsenal for a decade. It spilt over into a mass brawl involving 21 players in 1990; clearly too few people learnt from the fines of £50,000 imposed on each club and the deduction of points. And, apart from Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), no one has acted

swiftly between Wednesday night and Saturday morning to try to take responsibility, to acknowledge that something has to be done and quickly if the national sport is to maintain its integrity.

Football, perhaps more than any other single activity, can bring harmony between the races. The sight of Schmeichel, big and blond and Danish, verbally bullying those around him, including some of his own defenders, is destabilising. Wright, black and from south London, can be a charming, even loquacious conversationalist, yet he came late into football with a chip on both shoulders and his record of indiscipline is a litany of obscenities, both visual and verbal.

To wait, as the Football Association is customarily doing for reports, to wait inevitably for the processes of law, emanating from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) investigation into the first alleged racist argument between

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£50m flotation — 28  
Hassam's crusade — 51

and flawed process through the courts would leave impressions as ugly as stud marks on the game and on the public's view of intolerance within it.

The allegation against the Denmark international was refuted yesterday by Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager. "We can categorically deny any racist remark — whatsoever from Peter Schmeichel," he said.

However, Taylor was correct to seek — before the coming-together in acrimony of Wright and Schmeichel on Wednesday — to act as mediator between the pair. He was correct in suggesting that the FA was the proper umbrella for this mediation, but what a pity that Lancaster Gate dithered, prefer-

ring to put off any action unless, or until, police concluded their investigation.

Wright, of course, can do no wrong. Arsenal, inevitably, tell us so. Arsene Wenger, their French manager, chose yesterday to joke: "Maybe they will meet before the next game and sort this out — and kill one another!"

These are the very last words we need to hear in the present situation. We have a public game, two highly paid public figures and around them an atmosphere in which a national newspaper has recently taken upon itself to name, with photographs, white youths who they say killed a black person simply because of racial intolerance.

This afternoon, in stadiums throughout Britain, football again will engage our emotions. The winner-takes-all philosophy means that some player, somewhere, may take his cue from Wright, a

member of the England international squad.

"I have seen many, many tackles and punches that have not been judged or seen by referees and nobody talks about them," Wenger insisted. His own club happens to be bottom of the fair play league, with 59 yellow cards and four red ones in 27 FA Carling Premiership games, yet Wenger will not apologise for indiscipline.

If Arsenal has nothing better to offer in this matter, if the FA is merely lying back waiting, then perhaps Taylor must go it alone. Football needs an immediate and public handshake, a cessation of hostile words and actions, from Wright and Schmeichel. One hopes that the PFA can arrange this, can, in the sporting vernacular, "knock their heads together" and remind the players of Arsenal and Manchester United what they came from the game and what they owe to the public.

**Chelsea prepare for test of title credentials**

## Gullit fails to tempt Kluivert from Ajax

By RUSSELL KEMPSON AND PETER BALL

RUUD GULLIT'S empire building at Chelsea has received a temporary setback, with Patrick Kluivert, the Holland and Ajax striker, having declined to join the expanding foreign legion at Stamford Bridge. Gullit's audacious attempt failed because of Kluivert's preference to play in Italy, for AC Milan, rather than in England when he leaves Ajax at the end of the season.

Gullit's move, though unsuccessful, is barely surprising. His contacts extend deep into Europe, built from a highly successful playing career, and he has persuaded Gianluca Vialli, Gianfranco Zola, Roberto Di Matteo and Frank Leboeuf to forsake the continent for West London this season.

The offers of vast salaries have helped entice the three Italians and Leboeuf, a Frenchman, but even reported wages of £25,000-a-week were not enough to lure Kluivert, 20, from Amsterdam. He will follow a similar route to Gullit, the Chelsea player-manager, who left PSV Eindhoven for AC Milan in 1987.



Kluivert: bound for Milan

"I wanted Patrick but I couldn't get him," Gullit said yesterday, after completing his side's preparations for their FA Carling Premiership match against Manchester United at Stamford Bridge this afternoon. "He made his own decision and wanted to try things in Italy."

"I made an attempt, I watched him, I did everything. Nobody knows that, but I go to Holland often and I do my job. But if the player wants to make the same adventure as I

did, that's OK." Gullit may yet try again. "I've told Patrick that I will wait a year and if it does not go well for him, then I will be back. I am making preparations for next season and anyone can see that we are short of bodies. We don't need just players, we need good players."

However, Paul Ince, the England and Internazionale midfielder player, does not enter the Chelsea equation. Gullit was unimpressed by the pairing of Ince and David Batty, of Newcastle United, when England lost 1-0 to Italy in their World Cup qualifying match at Wembley last week.

"I have no interest in Paul," Gullit said. "We have a similar player in Eddie Newton and having two players like that, you will get the same thing that happened for England against Italy. I'm very happy with Eddie, he's doing very well and I don't need him and Ince in the same area."

Chelsea need to win today to retain any interest in the title chase. They trail United, the leaders, by 12 points, but have games in hand and were the

## Blackburn left in limbo by Eriksson's Italian job

By DAVID MADDOCK

IT WAS the worst kept secret in football, but Blackburn Rovers finally stopped defuding themselves long enough to concede, yesterday, a truth that anybody with a passing interest has known for months — Sven Goran Eriksson, the Swede, will not be joining them as the next manager.

In a terse statement, Jack Walker, the owner of Blackburn, expressed his disappointment after a lengthy conversation with Eriksson resolved the saga.

"He has told us that he and his family want to stay in Italy, and that he would like to join Lazio when his contract with Sampdoria expires," Walker said. "It is terribly disappointing because we had a firm contract with him and we were looking forward to him coming here."

Eriksson, for his part, did have the grace to apologise. "I would like to say sorry to the Blackburn supporters because the speculation cannot have

been easy for them to accept," he said. "It has been an unfair situation and I was anxious to conclude it as soon as possible. My family are very happy and settled here."

So Blackburn find themselves in a familiar position, that of searching for a manager of sufficiently high profile to appease their restless supporters and lift the club back to the heights that Walker has come to demand.

It took longer than a month to arrive at Eriksson when Ray Harford resigned in November and Blackburn will be hoping that another successor can be found with more haste, despite the continuing excellence of Tony Parkes, the man detailed to act as a caretaker manager until Eriksson's proposed arrival in the summer.

They may already, in fact, have a suitable candidate, who was alerted during the last round of approaches. Roy Hodgson, the English-born coach of Internazionale, in

Milan, had considered joining Rovers — on a contract also delayed until the summer — before Eriksson's agreement curtailed discussions.

Things have deteriorated somewhat in Italy since then for Hodgson and he is apparently keen to prove himself in his homeland. Blackburn have not been as hesitant in a search for a manager this time around. They have already made informal contact with Hodgson and received an encouraging reply. Formal talks could begin almost immediately.

At least one new face arrived at Blackburn yesterday in the shape of Per Pedersen, 27, a Denmark international who moved there for £2.5 million from Odense. He signed a 4½-year contract after passing a medical examination that lasted 11 hours and will be in the squad to play Liverpool this afternoon.

Premiership guide, page 50



Luc Alphand, of France, hurtles towards victory in the super giant slalom World Cup event at Garmisch-Partenkirchen yesterday, proving that

his failure to win a medal at the recent world championships in Sestriere was a rare aberration in an all-conquering season. His success gave him the lead

in the overall World Cup standings. "Forget about the world championships," he said. "That's all water under the bridge."

## Hingis replaces Graf in driving seat

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

MARTINA HINGIS, the Swiss tennis sensation, who is not yet old enough to drive, has signed a three-year sponsorship deal with Opel, the car company. In the latest of a series of business agreements, Hingis, 16, signed a three-year contract with the General Motors subsidiary on Thursday. She replaces Steffi Graf, the world No 1 from Germany, whose contract with the company was terminated last year in the wake of the scandal surrounding her tax affairs.

GM Europe officials declined to say how much they

will pay Hingis to wear their logo, star in commercials and smile at corporate events, but informed speculation is that it will be about \$680,000 (£430,000) per year.

Hingis, who won the Australian Open last month to become the youngest grand slam event champion in 100 years, has moved up to No 2 in the world rankings. Even before her recent triumph in Melbourne, she had signed a \$10 million, five-year deal with Sergio Tacchini, the Italian sportswear company.

A GM Europe spokesman said yesterday: "Relations remain good between us and

Steffi Graf, even though there is no formal contract. We didn't separate on bad terms."

He added that GM Europe had had close links with Hingis and her family for the past four years. "It's just a new chapter," he said.

Marc Göller, of Germany, made comfortable progress into the semi-finals of the European Community championship in Antwerp yesterday as Martin Damm, his opponent from the Czech Republic, retired injured soon after the start of their match. Damm, ranked No 48 in the world, had needed treatment for a twisted ankle on

Thursday in the closing stages of his second-round victory over Marcelo Rios, the No 2 seed from Chile.

Göller, the world No 57, had not beaten Damm in their two previous meetings but was in complete control during the 15-minute contest. He broke the Czech's service 2-0 ahead and took a 3-0 lead with an ace. Göller faces the winner of the quarter-final between Tim Henman, the British No 1 and sole surviving seed, and Francisco Claver, a clay-court battler from Spain, who has taken three sets to win each of his previous two matches.

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Ginny Dougary:  
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à deux  
home life - 15

# THE TIMES weekend

Mexico  
and its  
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for lunch  
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SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22 1997

LINDA McDUGALL PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHN ANDERSON



## Waiting for E-Day

FRIDAY

Austin has a letter from Tony Blair in the post at home asking him for help in running the country.

"...together you and I can make it possible for everyone to have a fair chance of a job..."

Rapid shallow breathing.

Then we spot: "...if you intend to vote Labour, will you send us fifteen quid..."

A cruel trick. You'd think they'd be more sensitive in the pan-handling unit at Millbank Tower.

I've booked us a holiday. We're off on the 21st of March or the 11th of April or the 2nd of May. It's up to John Major. Austin (Mitchell) has been MP for Grimsby for nearly 20 years and, now that there's a distinct possibility of a Labour victory, local people who don't understand the secret world of Westminster are asking him what ministerial job he'll get, and what car.

Having "difficult" views on Europe, and a rapidly approaching bus pass make an MP, well, hard to place (unless he's Alan Clark). Austin doesn't really want to sit around explaining his failure, while the phone never rings. So we're off to Death Valley, California.

One of the few perks I get as an MP's wife is 15 first-class return tickets between London and

home every year. On Friday afternoons I head for King's Cross and the Great North Eastern Railway (InterCity privatised, but still preserving the unique public relations style of old British Rail).

Watched by a youthful ticket clerk, I make a bit of a mess filling in my destination on the warrant form. I have been using warrants for 20 years; changing them, spilling coffee on them, even forging. A's signature (in extremis) No one (smile brilliantly here) has ever rejected one before.

"Well, I'm rejecting it, and you'll have to buy a ticket," barks the triumphant supervisor.

Seventy-five quid! Can't make a fuss; the impatient people queueing behind me are almost certainly Grimsby voters heading home.

Arrive home to find Austin in the kitchen. He has large hammer and is crashing up and down on my lovingly restored antique pine table.

"Hello darling, what are you doing?" (or something like that), I say. He has lost his car aerial and is crafting a new one from a wire coathanger (and he

wonders why he's not ministerial material).

SATURDAY  
Eric phones. Eric is Troublemaker in Chief. Sometimes a party member, sometimes not. Head honcho of the "Save Britain's Fish" campaign. He's 70 plus, rides a bicycle, wears a beret and a monocle and has absolutely all our home and office phone numbers. He phones and faxes at any hour of the day and night.

Eric is very worried. He has heard that Tony Blair is going to ban Euro-sceptics like Austin from taking a stand against EMU. Eric has just finished crafting panels for Austin's car, which scream, "Save Britain's fish. Save Britain's pound!" in 5ft-high letters. Will he be able to get away with this, or will Peter Mandelson personally appear on the 15.30 to Cleethorpes to tear them from the car? Say I'm not sure but

will consult A and call back. Hang up.

Eric phones again instantly. He is also installing a loud-speaker in the car so that he can shout, "Save Britain's fish. Save Britain's pound. Vote Labour!"

What will Tony Blair have to say about this? Remember all the complaints about Eric sounding like Hitler in previous elections. Suggest panels will have stunning impact and sound is not necessary. Eric extremely cross.

SUNDAY

There is a service on St Andrew's Dock in Hull at noon to remember all the fishermen who have died at sea. The service is very moving. Hard-faced trawlermen weep as we sing, "hear us as we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea", and watch carnations scattered on the water float away to sea. Afterwards I am chatting

with the Hull Euro MP Peter Crampton. Another Westminster MP, Stuart Randall, comes up and starts talking to Peter. Suddenly he thrusts a hand out to me and says: "Hello, I don't believe we have ever met." Stare at him in amazement and point out I am Austin's wife and not Peter's. And that he has known me for two decades. Launch into my favourite theory that middle-aged women are, in fact, invisible and that no one ever knows who I am unless I have Austin standing by my side. Stuart says his wife feels exactly the same. Wonder if he recognises her if he sees her chatting to John Prescott?

When we get home Austin spends a couple of hours assembling all the gear he was given on the BBC *Style Challenge* programme. Dark grey Italian wool suit, grey shirt, discreet grey and white tie, and navy "City gent" overcoat. Very

New Labour, very un-Austin. Ask him why. Says it's for next Wednesday morning when most of the Parliamentary Labour Party have a photo opportunity with Tony Blair.

They all have to turn up in the Shadow Cabinet room, pay five quid and get to pose with the Leader for as long as it takes to take a snap for the election leaflet.

Austin says he is planning to tell Tony about the holiday in Death Valley and see if he asks him not to go. (He wouldn't be so daft, would he?)

MONDAY

Not yet broken new year's resolution to give up trying to change Austin. Resolution strongly tested when I walk in the door from work. He is sitting on sofa asking what there is to eat, and wearing the most appalling tie I have ever seen - *Baywatch* babes rampant. Pamela Anderson just over his heart. Ignore tie. Make supper. Austin goes off to vote, and be on *Newsnight*. Small soup stain on Geena Lee Nolin.

TUESDAY

Six-thirty am. Swimming pool

changing room. Smart-arse civil servant woman asks me how I can tolerate being married to man who wears ties like that? She is not joking. Tell her I wonder that myself sometimes. I am not joking.

Tie gets mention on *Yesterday in Parliament*.

Austin has made an important contribution to last night's debate suggesting Millennium celebrations should be relocated from Greenwich to Grimsby.

Tie appears again in Matthew Parris's *Times* column under "Grimsby or bust", headline.

*World in Action* producer rings to ask where he could buy a tie like that. Offer to post it to him, free.

WEDNESDAY

Tony Blair photo opportunity day. Austin up early assembling his *Style Challenge* kit. He amazes me by suggesting these events have to be taken seriously. Perhaps he really does believe there's a chance for him in New Labour.

Around lunch time I ring to see how it went. Cancelled. It will be rescheduled "in the future".

Well, that's good news then. A few weeks more freedom for us. They can't have a general election when a couple of

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Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to board a No 13 bus at Finchley Road, London NW2, obtain, by any means necessary, a ticket to take you as far as Oxford Street, and return within three hours with six bagels, a tube of Oxy-10, a fully working office-type clock housing a mono CCTV and microphone, and a camera concealed in a cigarette lighter.

If you take my advice, you will pick up the bagels at Panzer's in St John's Wood on the way back so as to get them as fresh as possible; the zit cream you can buy in Boots at Swiss Cottage. As for the surveillance equipment, well, everyone knows you can get that from Spymaster at Portman Square.

For a long time, before I started shopping there regularly on my

way to work, I was intrigued by the grey frontage of Spymaster. In the same way that my local newsagent has "News-Mags-Chocolate-Fags" above the door, so Spymaster has "Counter Surveillance-Survival Equipment-Body Armour-Night Vision".

For years, though, I never went in. When I needed, say, a lightweight anti-slab jacket or a Dedal 40 Image Intensifying Rifle Scope I just had to make it myself. I assumed that you needed some sort of cash-and-carry card issued only to 00 agents and occasionally forged by Drax operatives.

Push open their door, which is like any other door on any other shopping street, and you enter another world. "What is this thing that looks like your common or garden fizzy drinks can (£15?) you

## SERIOUS SHOPPING

## COUNTER ESPIONAGE



GILES COREN

ask. And a rolling-shouldered man in his mid-20s, most unQ-like, shakes it so that you hear the fizzy drink gurgling inside, and then unscrews the top to reveal a secret compartment ideal for the storage of Semtex, microfilm, shark repellent (£30)...

He shows you the night vision equipment, and, naturally, you want to know all about the headset that you slip on to trace baddies in the dark, but he tells you that those are a bit dated now and hands you a pocket scope (£3,500). "This is the smallest second-generation night vision unit on the market. It intensifies available light by a factor of 20,000, is water-resistant

and will accept any 'C' mount lens... Pay attention, 007? But you cannot, because in the background there are people trying out pinhole cameras that can be

disguised in a tie and calculators with hidden transmitters. "Leave it on the table at a board meeting and when you go to the loo you can listen to what they say while you are out of the room."

These people may have been trained in the identifying and disabling of malevolent agents, but what they know about calming paranoid tendencies could be invisible-linked on the back of an exploding cigar. "If you think you have a problem," says their brochure, "then you probably have."

To this end, you can sort yourself out with a telephone-tap packed in what looks like a travelling chess set (£1,250). All you

have to do is sneak up on the home of the intended victim, cut the phone line, reconnect it using two small crocodile clips, and you're away. Unless, of course, said victim has purchased a scrambler (£500) or a voice changer (£70), which will make him sound like Metal Mickey and never hold up in court.

If you don't think you can cope with the rigours of espionage yourself, they know a man who can. "Should you suspect that you have an information leak? We have a highly trained counter-team available..."

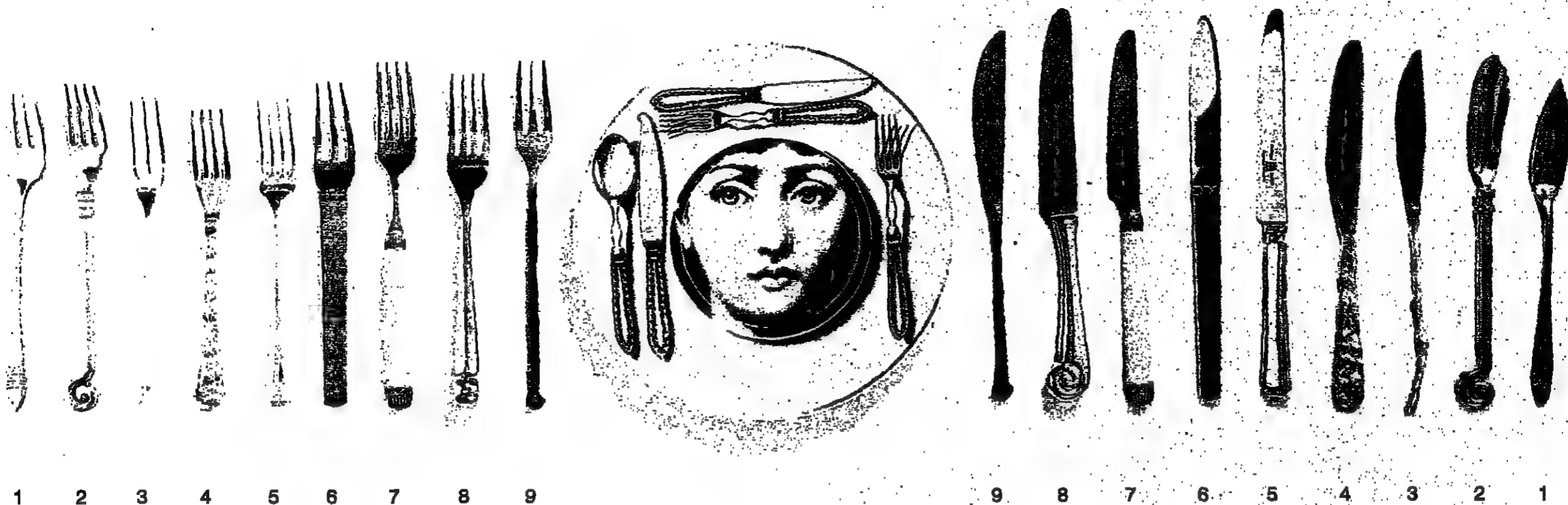
My only worry is that the man who comes to mend the leak will be more like a plumber than a double agent: a man who appears in a wet suit, peels off to reveal a

dinner jacket, and then says, "Dear, dear. If only you'd called earlier. Best thing is to chuck it out and get a new one. Milk and two sugars if you're asking."

Much better to pick up a copy of *Sniper/Counter Sniper*, or *How to Disappear Completely*, and DIY. Then you will need some camouflage cream, a commando wire saw, some self-heating food and jungle survival pack, and you should be able to sneak off the bus with your bagels and acre remedy concealed in the Celltrack mobile phone interceptor — it is marked as a "restricted user product: law enforcement, military, and government agencies only" — but you have clearance at the highest level. Tell them we sent you.

This column will self-destruct in ten seconds...

# Cutting edge of designer cutlery



**MAIN PICTURE:** 1 Simple fish-head stainless steel cutlery; £3.95 for a teaspoon, £7.95 for a knife, from the Conran Shop, Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, SW3 6RD (0171-589 7401). 2 Chunky cutlery with pewter handles "inspired by the new South Africa", by Carol Boyes (range includes heart, wave and Arles designs), £28-£50, from Carole Bateman at Design Divine; available by mail order (0181-289 5556). 3 Two-handled, silver-plated and brass cutlery; £4.50 for a teaspoon, £12.50 for a knife, from the Conran Shop, as above. 4 Silver-plated cutlery with beaten design on handle, by Maryse Boxer at Chez Joseph; six-piece setting, £85, Chez Joseph, 26 Sloane Street, SW1X 7LQ (0171-245 9493). 5 First made in the mid-1930s "Harley" Sheffield stainless steel with a classic double reverse thread detail in the handle, seven-piece single place setting £56.55 (in silver-plate, £107.55), from Master Cutlery, 3 Shepherd Street, Mayfair, W1Y 7AN (0114-272 1504).

**RIGHT:** "Ammonite" stainless steel cutlery designed by Robert Welch, as below Silver Jester napkin ring, £54, by Mita Tanya Griebel (0171-328 8890). Cream damask napkin (24in), £22 each, or £130 for six, from the Irish Linen Company, 35-36 Burlington Arcade, W1 (0171-493 8949).

FOR THE true gourmet, it's not only what you eat, but what you eat it with. Fortunately, etiquette no longer dictates a vast canteen of cutlery, but there's nothing more dismal than tucking into your meal with beaten-up knives and forks. Designers are now turning their attention to cutlery. SUDI PIGOTT

**MAIN PICTURE:** 6 For label-conscious diners, Hermes' new range of stainless steel cutlery is much heavier and larger than most sets on sale; £28 for a fork, £40 for a knife, from Hermes, 179 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-823 1014). 7 Cream "Carthage" cutlery with nylon handles and engraved old-silver-look detail ends, dishwasher safe; each piece £2.25, from Dickens & Jones At Home, 224-244 Regent Street, W1A 1DB (0171-734 7070). 8 "Ammonite" stainless steel cutlery designed by Robert Welch, a contemporary version, with hollow handles, of the traditional pistol-grip handle design popular since the mid-18th century; six seven-piece place settings, £300, from Robert Welch, Silver Shop, Lower High Street, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire GL55 8DY; available by mail order (01388 840522). 9 Iron Age stainless steel cutlery, six-piece place setting £75, by Maryse Boxer from Chez Joseph, 26 Sloane Street, SW1X 7LQ (0171-245 9493).

**CENTREPIECE:** Fornasetti-designed plate, £33.70, from Rosenthal Studio House, 137 Regent Street, W1 (0171-734 3076).

Photographs: Dee Jensen Styling; Caroline Griffiths



Cheese: the immaculate Member for Great Grimsby, right

Continued from page 1  
hundred Labour MPs haven't got a photograph of themselves taken with their leader.

**FRIDAY**  
Austin phones me to say he is very ill. When I arrive home at our house in Halifax mid-evening, he is wrapped in a blanket on the sofa writing his Anti Europe, Anti EMU (and no doubt soon to be banned) election manifesto, and wailing old movies on Sky. "What's for tea?" he asks between bouts of coughs and sneezes.

The kitchen is in chaos. Austin has been shopping, something which only happens when an election looms and he wants everyone to know how involved in the community he is. (You'll never guess who I saw in the supermarket today...)

**SATURDAY**  
Surprisingly, Austin still alive, but refusing to take phone calls, particularly from Eric. Fax arrives from Eric. He absolutely must try fitting the panels on the car today.

I set out for Eric's. He lives behind Blundell Park, the football stadium. The panels are made of wood. They are about 10ft long and 4ft high.

## 6 Austin suggests he and Tony should be photographed shaking hands. Art director says no. This will look like they've just met

They are painted bright scarlet and weigh a ton. The idea is to use them as a superstructure. A ferocious system of metal clamps will attach them to the car roof. Eric and I stumble into the road with one and hoist it aloft. The message is in bright yellow:

**AUSTIN SAYS:**  
SAVE BRITAIN'S FISH  
SAVE BRITAIN'S POUND!

Passing Grimsby Town fans gawp in disbelief. Eric mutters and adjusts clamps. He asks me to get into the car, open the sunroof, and stand on the driver's seat to test whether Austin will be visible above the superstructure. Believe it or not, I do this, and can just see over the top if I stand on my toes.

**MONDAY**  
Back to London and the biggest day in Austin's calendar. The annual Lords and Commons photographic exhibition. Mrs Bottomley has been invited to open the show. Like

all of us, she has pre-election tension and giggles a lot. She speaks warmly of her talented colleagues and is presented with a video stills camera by the Kodak sponsor. Then she says mysteriously: "Many people here will know that I am married to a shopaholic, so this will be very useful."

Slightly hysterical laughter from those in the know. I am puzzled. Does this mean that she will take stills of all husband Peter's purchases to provide evidence for the Parliamentary tax inspectors in Cardiff?

**WEDNESDAY**  
Austin is over the moon. The Independent has put one of his photos from the exhibition on its front page. He positively skips out of the door on his way to his long-awaited photo op with The Leader. He is going to tell Tony about our holidays plans. He is going to explain just why he needs to tell the truth about EMU in Grimsby, and why he won't be

able to endorse the party line on Europe in his campaign literature.

High noon in the Shadow Cabinet room. Tony Blair is ready and waiting. The Member for Great Grimsby, immaculate in his *Style Challenge* outfit, burlesque humorously that The Leader's suit is a bit creased. Leader consults suit doctors. Should he change? They think not.

Eager to get something right, A suggests he and Tony should be photographed shaking hands. Art director says no. This will look like they've just met. Nervous laughs all round. Austin opens his mouth to speak, but no words will come.

The Leader smiles his big Blair smile and holds out his hand. Three handshakes, three frames of film, and it's all over.

There is now a long queue of expectant MPs laden down with props from their constituencies, brought to add a "local" feel to their election

literature. Hugh Bayley clutches a glossy brochure from York council. Perhaps he is going to ask The Leader to bless it?

**FRIDAY**  
Because the election is so close, family life is on hold. I head straight for Grimsby on Fridays. I arrive in the mayor's parlour, Cleethorpes, for the local authority dinner in honour of its two MPs, Austin and the Tory Michael Brown. Everyone knows this will be the last official event before the election, so there's an end-of-term atmosphere.

Lisa, the photographer from the *Grimsby Evening Telegraph*, arrives and takes a shot of us all standing in a line and grinning dementedly.

As soon as the speeches are over we belt off to Leeds for a *This Is Your Life* on TV presenter Richard Whiteley, one of our oldest friends. Call from Eric on mobile. What did Tony Blair say about the panels for the car? Say I am not sure A and The Leader got round to this topic in their far-reaching discussion, but will consult and get back to him.

Get home at midnight and in a moment of madness offer to drive Austin, who looks exhausted, back to Grimsby for his Saturday surgery in six hours' time. He perks up and says that while I'm there I can visit Eric and sort something out about the panels.

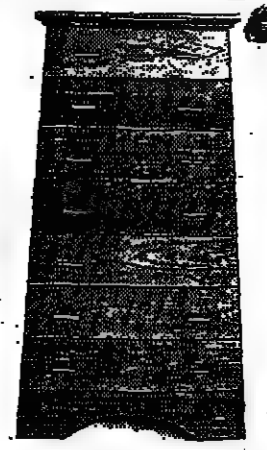
After surgery we head for Immingham for a photo opportunity for Shona McIsaac, the Labour candidate for Cleethorpes. Lisa from the *Telegraph* (does she never get any time off?) arranges the group, including Austin, all dressed in sweaters and weekend trousers. Shona, the perfect Labour woman candidate

in a smart, fitted orange jacket, short skirt and high-heeled shoes, perches nervously smiling on the edge of frame. Wonder how many votes this will land?

I mooch off to sit in the car, and get shouted at by Austin when he returns. "This is the pre-election period you know. People might think we've had a row if you bugger off like that."

Dear John Major,  
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# A suitable girl



RIGHT: Navy three-button jacket, £105; matching trousers, £43, Sisley, selected Benetton branches (0161-929 9259). Blue stretch boob tube, £25, No Such Soul, Hyde DF (0171-937 7835). Beige thong kitten-heel shoes, £300, Jimmy Choo, to order (0171-235 6006)



ABOVE: Cream four-button jacket, £75; matching trousers £40, Warehouse, 19-21 Argyle Street, W1, and branches (0171-278 3491). Blue, choc and beige stripe cotton knit vest, £65, Jigsaw, 126-127 New Bond Street, W1, and branches (0171-491 4484)



ABOVE: Black suede/patent wedge, £38.99, Office, 57 Neal Street, WC2, (mail order, 0181-838 4447)

## THREE OF A KIND

WITH their Seventies image, wedge-heeled shoes are making a comeback with new versions for the Nineties. These three are among the best. H.B.

Take John Galliano's advice: wear trouser suits for spring. They're sharp, sassy, versatile — the perfect antidote to those feminine florals



ABOVE: Pale blue crape double-breasted jacket, £180; matching trousers, £85, Karen Millen, branches nationwide (01622 664032)

RIGHT: Brown moc-croc jacket, £79; matching trousers, £45, Kookai, 123 High Street Kensington, London W8 (0171-937 4411). Snakeskin sandals, £300, Jimmy Choo, made to order (0171-235 6006)



All photographs: William Davies  
Hair/make-up: Alex Babicky  
Styling: Amanda Uppeal

The flipside to the ultra-feminine floral and ruffle looks around at the moment are the more sober masculine styles of women's trouser suits. Sharp and sassy, they are ideal for work or play and can be adapted for eveningwear.

At work, simple, good quality T-shirts or sharp, crisp-collared blouses can be worn beneath the jacket, but do not wear cravats or ties. These were big on the catwalks this season but avoid them. As the Savile Row tailor Richard James puts it: "Any woman wearing a tie looks silly — even the Princess of Wales."

At formal events, such as a company cocktail party, Christian Dior's maverick designer John Galliano is all for a trouser suit, saying: "A bias-cut suit can look both formal and elegant." When asked about his preference for skirts or trousers, he said: "Trousers suits are the modern choice for spring."

A quick change from stiff shirt to a lace camisole, and out of your practical loafers into simple kitten-heels, can transform a day suit into evening effortlessly.

On more casual occasions, the look can be toned down with a simple, stripey, fine-knit singlet, a bra-top or a boob-tube. The more adventurous could opt to wear nothing underneath a well-lined, high-cut jacket or low-cut top.

A hint of lace on the edge of a scooped top can lift an outfit if peeking from beneath the jacket in a contrast colour — light blue under navy, beige under chocolate.

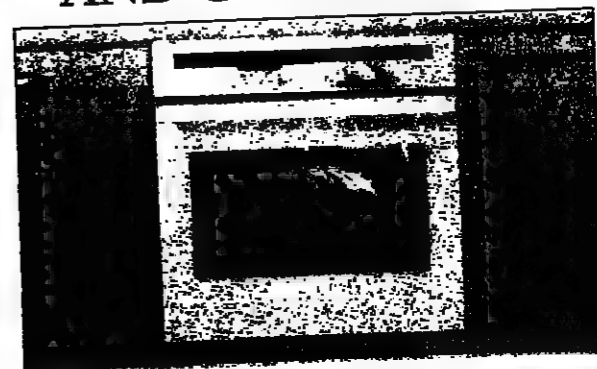
Fine crepes and wools can soften an outfit, and will keep you cool. New technology textiles, such as breathable synthetic mixes and high-sheen plastics, are youthful and add a modern edge to even the most classic of styles.

When it comes to jacket buttonings, there are no rules. Double-breasted is back but cut in softer lines, three and two-button high fastenings cover well, and a new one-button look is simple and clean.

The most important part of the suit, the trousers, tend to be slim-legged this year and, when worn with a longline jacket, are flattering to most figures. Slight bootleg kick flares can be found but will soon date. Look out for suits that come with a matching skirt for extra versatility and longer wearability.

HEATH BROWN

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## GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON  
replies to readers' letters

**Q** My carrots and parsnips grow 2in-3in, then divide in up to six ways. What's the remedy? — E. Gore-Squires, Sudbury, Suffolk.

**A** Heavy or compacted soils are the cause of this. Cultivate the soil well, adding a lot of organic matter, but not nitrogen-rich composts which can make matters worse.

**Q** Two years ago I had my garden relaid as an "easy-care" screed garden with a membrane under the stone. Since then, horse tails have pushed through a large area. I have used Roundup to kill it, but more keeps appearing. How do I eradicate the weed? — Mrs L. Cregar, Watford, Hertfordshire.

**A** Geotextile membranes, designed to let water through but discourage weeds, work well but cannot suppress tough, perennial weeds such as horse tail. Screed gardens, rockeries or any other new plantings, with or without a membrane, should never be attempted before all perennial weeds have been eradicated. You have no choice now but to persist with the weed-killing until the site is clean. If you knew the horse tail was present, and told your contractor so, and were advised that the membrane would suppress it, you may have a case against him. See what he says.

**Q** Many garden centres have only a limited range of dahlia tubers and no list. Can you recommend specialist dahlia growers who have a full list? — R.C. Agombar, Salisbury, Wiltshire.

**A** I am tempted to say that things are improving at garden centres on the dahlia front. As the plant becomes fashionable again the range of cultivars for sale in pre-packs grows, too, though they are mostly in the dwarf, bedding end of the range. You can even buy black and scarlet 'Bishop of Landaff' off the peg now. For a dahlia nursery, try Halls of Heddon, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 0JS (01661 852445), or Osofort's Dahlias, Spurborough Road, Doncaster DN5 8BE (01302 785026). When looking for suppliers of a particular kind of plant, from dahlias

and delphiniums, air plants and alpenes, to topiary and wild flowers, a useful source of information is *The Gardener's Yearbook*, published by Macmillan for the Royal Horticultural Society at £14.99, from bookshops.

**Q** My 3ft-tall, 60-year-old yew hedge is dying on one side, possibly because it is close to a building and is deprived of sun. I plan to cut it down low and start again from the bottom up. The trunks are thick and healthy, but I am not sure exactly how low to cut them, and when. To help, I shall feed it with dried blood and compost, unless you can think of anything better. — Sir Clive Rose, Sudbury, Suffolk.

**A** I would be reluctant to cut down strong, healthy trunks of that age. And there is no real need to. Instead, cut off all the back of the hedge to leave the bare vertical trunks on that one side. The cutting will be invisible from the front, but will let enough light in to regenerate a new back. Your feeding recipe is ideal, except that you should water copiously. Could it be that drought in the rain shadow of a wall is part of the hedge's problem?

**Q** My 90-bush hedge was planted 20 years ago as a windbreak and to subdivide the garden. It has been that height for half its life. Would it be possible to reduce its height by, say, 5ft — even over several years — without endangering it? — A.J. Easterbrook, Bromley, Kent.

**A** You can certainly cut it down to 4ft. Do it this month, and cut to a height which allows for some top regrowth before reaching the new final height. It will be a shock, but not fatal. Feed and water it well. If you wish to reduce the width too, give it a couple of years to recover before reducing the sides, one at a time. Such large cuts into the central leader of a tree can lead to long-term rot which reduces the overall life of the hedge. But it is still worth doing.

**Q** Readers should write to: *Garden Answers*, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington, St. London E14 9XN. We regret that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.



The window of Geoff Hewitt's flat is a mass of well-chosen colour and shapes, thanks to potted plants that stand on an outer windowsill and can be replaced as they die off

# Potty ideas for your window

Are you a Mayfair minimalist or the cottage garden type? Even in dull winter months your window box can say a lot about you, says Jane Owen

**W**hat does your window box say about you? Are you a stylish Mayfair type, with ivy, clipped box balls and white cyclamen decorating the front of your house? A local worthy, sporting a selection of dwarf conifers and heathers? A devil-may-care sort, whose window box resounds with clashing pansies and cyclamen. An architectural minimalist, with stark structural pyramid-shaped box trees? Or is your style sweet and cosy with a deft mixture of blues and yellows of early daisies, hyacinths, primulas and *Iris reticulata*? Or, again, the window box announcing: "I'm very busy but managed to find these primulas at the corner shop?"

All the styles have their merits, because they strut their stuff at this time of year when gardens can look dismal. A splash of colour at the front of a house entertains the eye and cheers the soul.

The winter display that impressed me when I lived in

London was on the windowsill of a flat opposite. Instead of a window box, there were a series of flower pots of various sizes, none of them fancy, growing plants rarely associated with window plantings.

In January I met the man responsible, Geoff Hewitt, a garden designer. (His real name is James Hewitt, but he prefers Geoff for obvious reasons.) His windowsill displays the kind of unusual plants that his clients refuse to accept; they want something elegant and restrained. The display is to restrain what a Russian vine is to grow.

Each of his plants lives in its own pot: an exotic rosette of spiky, lance-shaped leaves from *Agave americana*; the more architectural drama from the green-yellow leaves *Phormium* 'Yellow Wave'; lower-level architectural shapes from a house leek, *Servieria*; a splash of colour from the cabbage 'Stokeley Red'; sunny buttercup-like flowers of the winter aconite *Eranthis hyemalis*;

reddish-green foliage of wood spurge, *Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robustior*; snowdrops; beautifully cupped, green flowers of *Helleborus viridis*; lavender; cherry yellow of the dwarf *Narcissus* 'Tête-à-tête'; a clump of the hairy, trailing *Thymus serpyllum*; and a pale rosette of hairy leaves made by a biennial *Verbascum*, which will later throw up a great fiery spike

doth with yellow flowers, albeit much shorter, because of its pot-bound roots, than the normal 8ft-10ft plant it would otherwise achieve. This is the kind of planting many people find too adventurous. Others worry about maintenance. But keeping classically good-looking displays is straight forward: the key, box, ivy, green-and-white look that can manage for two

or three months without any interference.

Mr Hewitt's selection of plants need more tending and the pots have to be moved about as each plant reaches its best. It can be replaced in an instant. When part of a window box display goes over it has to be dug into, disrupting neighbouring plants which have to be closely planted for the best effect.

"I don't hesitate to move the pots about frequently and I take out any plant as soon as it is past its best. What I aim for at all times is a structure, body and interest. But you have to keep the pots simple or they start to compete with the plants," says Mr Hewitt who came to Britain in 1987 after two years on a flower farm in his native Tasmania and worked for a while at the London nursery Clifton, and then as a gardener at a country house before setting up his garden design firm. He warns against using small pots or mixing the

planting in each pot. For his own pots, Mr Hewitt uses multi-purpose compost, replaced after each season.

Using flower pots for windowsills is an art mastered on much of continental Europe. Think of the scene from basil plants sitting in Italian kitchen windows, where the other favourite, geranium, lily holly against the window surround. Think of the great cascades of trailing pink and red and white geraniums from pots on French windowsills. Here, at this time of year, pot displays demand more imagination.

Every plant can be given its own soil mix so that acid lovers can mingle happily with acid haters, and the only thing every container needs is water-retaining granules for the summer, which can be bought from any garden centre, and some appropriate slow-release fertiliser. Nutrients leach out faster in containers than in beds and, now that 6X organic fertiliser comes in non-smelly pellet form, a few of the pellets of this on the pots of hungry plants, such as pansies, will help sustain flowering and ward off disease and pest attack. ● Geoff Hewitt, 0171-609 7837.

## WEEKEND TIPS

- Encourage dormant fuchsias and pelargoniums into growth with a sparing application of water. Plant dry begonia tubers in cool, moist seed compost, to initiate root growth.
- Feed apples, pears and plum trees with nitrogen and potash fertiliser. Prune stone fruit trees as growth begins.
- Plant Jerusalem artichokes 6in deep. Greengrocer's tubers are perfectly good but, for less knobbly tubers and easier peeling, plant a reliable named variety from a horticultural supplier.
- Shallots may be planted now.
- Check bedding wallflowers for wind rock, and ensure that they are all firm in the ground.
- Divide early-leaving perennials, such as pulmonarias and brunners.

Buying plants after a frozen winter needs care. Stephen Anderton tells how to spot wrong 'uns



Left to right: the rosette *Aloe succulent*, corkscrewing *Viburnum tinus* and *Pinus radiata*, and the conifer *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Elegans'

**T**he best place for the roots of any plant when it is bitterly cold is underground. But how do you tell when a plant has suffered damage from being frozen in its pot? And how can you tell if it is dead?

During last month's cold weather I visited a garden centre in Cambridge, where I was pleased to see netting erected over the banks of potted plants outdoors to keep the worst of the cold off them, as well as the snow. In bitter weather, pots are best grouped close together — pot-thick, as nurserymen call it — to reduce the chill to their roots. And, the nearer to the ground the better: plants on any kind on a raised bench are going to get colder than those on the ground.

Sometimes it is hard to tell if a plant is alive or dead when you buy it. Conifers, whose foliage has been browned, should be avoided. The chances are that they have been burned by the cold or wind when unable to draw moisture from a frozen rootball. Conifers are not

## Dead giveaways for sick plants

always quick to die, and a plant may only become brown all over, sometimes in a few days, when the weather begins to warm up in spring. Yew, especially, has a habit of saving its death rattle until April or May.

Bronzing is another matter. There are conifers, such as the feathery *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Elegans', whose foliage turns a plummy purple or bronze in cold weather. This is entirely natural and has a measure of attraction. Other conifers, including yew, may show purpling of the leading shoots. But if it is brownness which is to be avoided.

When buying an evergreen, it's wise

to turn it out of its pot to check the roots. The tips should be white and healthy, and have a good grip on the compost. Plants whose roots have spiralled at the bottom of the pot have been potted for too long anyway. Buy them if you must, but they will require teasing out of the corkscrew, and spreading out in the planting hole. Sometimes this is impossible, and root pruning is the only answer.

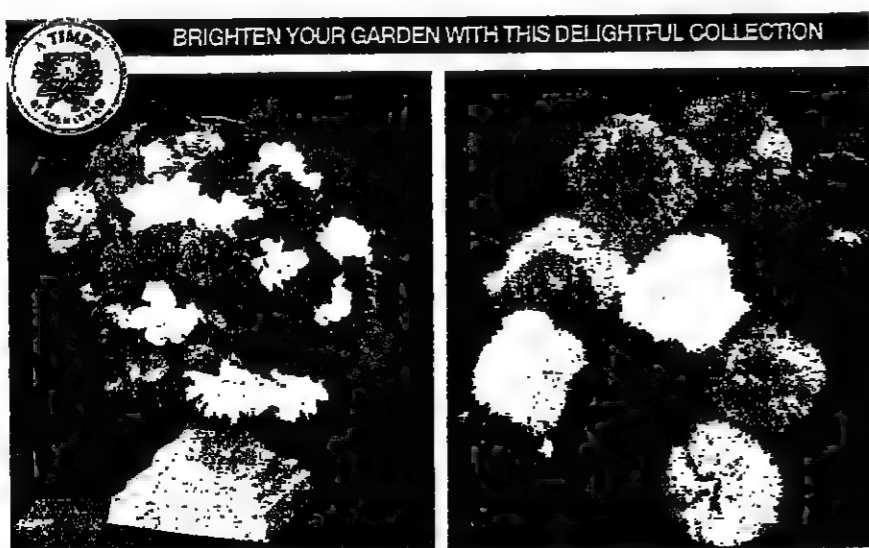
Corkscrewing of roots is less important on some evergreens than others. Broad-leaved evergreens, such as *Viburnum tinus* and laurel, have fibrous roots and a dome-shaped canopy, and can overcome a congested rootball by

themselves in time. But in a fast-growing shelter tree, such as *Pinus radiata*, corkscrew roots should be avoided at all costs. They need efficient horizontal roots to hold themselves up and take the force of the wind. Staking a pine with a corkscrew root is only putting off the evil day when it blows down or hunches over.

When buying herbaceous plants after a freeze, look for swelling buds in the crown of the plant, and be suspicious of plants in leaf but in waterlogged compost; they ought to be using that water if the plant is alive.

Sour, stinking compost is a sure sign of dead roots.

Rosette plants, with a single central root like a dandelion, are prone to rot away in wet and cold. Sometimes the rosette of foliage remains firm when the roots have rotted off at the neck. So pull gently to see if the rosette has a firm hold in the pot. If it is going to lift off like a mob-cap, it is better to know before you buy and get it home.



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Picture television footage of hurricane Flossie ripping through the Caribbean, coconut palms bent almost double in the torrents of wind and rain. Then picture the fan palm *Trachycarpus* in a Himalayan woodland at 8,000 feet, covered in snow from November to March. This has to be the one we are interested in.

Then picture Martin Gibbons, palm collector, in a gold-mining ghost town, deep in the Sudan and the Nubian desert, finding the Argon palm, whose fruits were buried in ancient Egyptian tombs, and which has not been recorded in the wild since 1907. This man is determined we should enjoy hardy palms more in Britain, and I have to agree.

Palms have become a way of life for Martin Gibbons. After school he spent three years working in Australia, and visited Singapore Botanic Garden, which is known for the range of its different palms.

He came home, found jobs in a supermarket then department store sales, was made redundant, and then thought "I should be growing palms". So he did. And sold them. The house was full of them — on the stairs, in the bath, the window ledges, everywhere. He has had his present business, The Palm Centre, in East Sheen not far from Kew Gardens, for eight years. It is a thriving little concern, but some things don't change. Every inch of the premises is palm-girt: indoor palms line the stairs to the office, and the old kitchen serves as a potting shed. At the back are polytunnels of rampant palmery.

"I don't grow any plants I don't like. I have tree ferns, and bananas — oh, and yuccas and bamboos. And palms. Mostly palms." The trouble with palms — like any big group of closely related plants — is that together in rows, as young

## Palm trees can do surprisingly well in British weather, says Stephen Anderton

plants, they start to look the same. Except perhaps that they obviously divide into fan palms and feather palms, by the leaf shape.

But they are all individuals to Martin Gibbons. Last year he spent four months travelling the world looking at palms, collecting seed, and taking photographs. His first book, *Identifying Palms*, has sold in astonishing numbers and has even been translated into Spanish. His customers, as well as home gardeners, include hotels, a zoo, aviaries, swimming pools and a Golf State ruler. Coals to Newcastle, maybe, but it proves he is a specialist. But only half of what he sells is indoor palms; the other half goes into British gardens.

We talked about that hardest of

palms, the *Chusan* palm, *Trachycarpus fortunei*, which I had grown successfully in Northumberland. Mine was 10ft tall, and jammed into a small raised bed in a sheltered southeast-facing corner. Gibbons emphasised the need for warmth and shelter, so those huge fan-shaped leaves are not ragged by wind. "But the root system is actually quite small. They are very easy to transplant."

I asked how fast they grow (I had only known mine as an oldie). "As much as a foot a year if they are well fed," said Gibbons, "but they grow for several years before they start to develop a trunk. The crown builds up for 6-8 years in the ground, then it starts to shoot up. Buying a plant which is already a

couple of feet high will save you the first 4-5 years' waiting. They need plenty of food and water to really get them moving." That makes sense. If a palm can only have one bud, it might as well be a big one.

He also recommends tying up the fronds of palms in bitterly cold or snowy periods. "Just pull up the leaves and bundle them together with string, and wrap them with sack or polythene. Ice in the crown does palms most harm. As soon as the weather improves, the wraps can come off again." And that makes sense too: if a plant only has one bud and you lose it, then that plant has had it.

And the best hardy palms for a British garden? *Trachycarpus fortunei*, the *Chusan* palm, came first. It's the toughest. Second was *Trachycarpus wagnerianus*, which has stiffer fans, is less prone to wind damage, and is good in less sheltered gardens. The leaves are deeply cut, like a peacock's tail.

Third came *Trachycarpus sickmensis*. It does not have the hairy trunk of the *Chusan* palm, but it has bigger leaves and is extremely fast growing. It requires wind shelter to do well.

Fourth is the Mediterranean fan palm, *Chamaerops humilis*. This, unusually, is a bushy species, and will make a bundle of stems up to 6-8ft in old age. You can clean these up to make a multi-stemmed plant if you like to see the trunks. Martin Gibbons recommends the "blue" form, 'Cerifera', from the high Atlas mountains of Morocco, which has a steely grey, almost blue-white tinge to the foliage.

And lastly? There would have to be one feather palm, as all the others are fans. It was *Butia capitata*, the jelly (as in American jam) palm, slow to grow, but full of southern promise.

Plant a few if you have space. Plant a jungle, as Nick Sharp has done in his sunny but windy garden near Derby. He has five *Chusan* palms, two *Chamaerops*, a *Butia*, and is even trying the Brazilian palm, *Trithrinax acanthocoma*, which is another fan palm. "A few more years, and it will be jungle," he says.

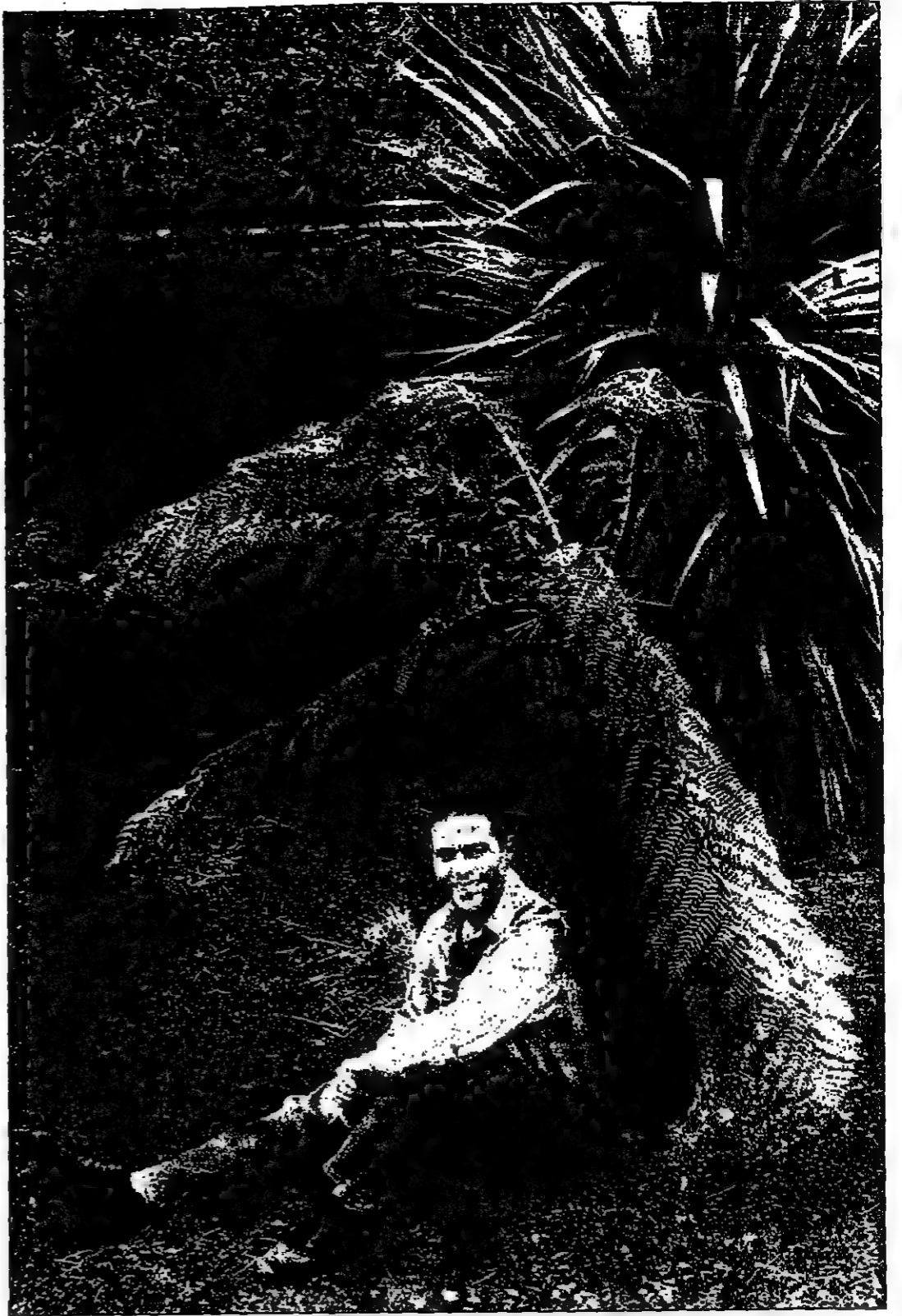
### PALM OFFER



*Trachycarpus fortunei* is on offer at £19.95

As a special offer to readers of The Times, the hardy palm *Trachycarpus fortunei* (pictured left) which survives the cold well is available ready for planting outside now, at 10-12cm tall, for the reduced price of £19.95 (normally £24.95) plus £4.50 p.p. From Palm Centre at the address below.

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Barbados? No Derbyshire: Nick Sharp sits against an Australian tree fern in his garden

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مذاكرات لاصح



Corsham Court, by Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton

# Castle with a carpet of snowdrops

OPEN THIS WEEKEND

■ Corsham Court, Corsham, Wiltshire (01249 701610).

On A4, four miles west of Chippenham. Open Jan-Mar, Sat-Sun, 2-4.30pm; Apr-Oct, daily except Mon (open Bank hols), 11am-5.30pm. £3, children £1.

This is a garden of note, having been created by Capability Brown and his successor, Humphrey Repton. Corsham was also one of the projects where Brown was responsible for the house; he carried out extensive alterations and additions to the Elizabethan original, which survives facing the entrance courtyard. Brown's work was followed by further architectural changes, but the impressive picture gallery he designed continues to display one of England's foremost picture collections. Set in parkland to the east of the house is the lake that Brown planned, but never executed, and Repton carried out. To one side, however, is Corsham's gem, the Gothic bathhouse that Brown designed and built, and which ranks among the elite of English garden buildings.

■ Chirk Castle gardens, Chirk, Wrexham, north Wales (01691 777701).

Off A5 west of Chirk, eight miles north of Oswestry. Open today and tomorrow, noon-4pm (last admission 3.30pm). Then Mar 26-Sept 23, daily except Mon and Tues (open Bank hols). Oct. Sat-Sun, 11am-6pm



The gardens at Chirk Castle, near Wrexham in north Wales, are renowned at this time of the year for the snowdrops on its terrace and in the large woodland garden

(last admission 4.30pm). Feb weekends £1, children 50p. Later, £2.20, children £1.10.

The great Marches castle, perched on a hill, was clearly built for defence rather than comfort. It is only since the 18th century that its surroundings have been softened with parkland and gardens, whose most impressive decorative feature greets you at the entrance — a superb wrought iron screen and gates made in the 18th century by the Davies blacksmith brothers. From the lawn to one side of the castle, an opening in great, old yew hedges beckons to a long, grassy walk which is the heart of the garden. At the far end, a terrace presents spectacular views over the

English border. At this time of year, the feature is the number of snowdrops here and in the large woodland garden.

■ Wolterton Park, Erpingham, Norfolk (01263 584175).

Two miles north of Aylsham, via A140. Open daily all year, 9am-5pm. Car park £2.

Wolterton, on a crisp winter or early spring day, exemplifies the spaciousness of the 18th-century parks in Norfolk, cradle of England's agricultural revolution at that time. It is a place to walk and think back to the 1730s, when the elegant house was built by Horatio Walpole whose brother, Sir Robert, had recently completed work at

Houghton Hall across the county. The present Lord Walpole is carrying out restoration. A ruined church tower provides a focal point for walks through the park, as well as an attractive note that would have certainly met the approval of Wolterton's original owner. Magnificent spreading oak trees add natural scale to the enormous park, towards which the house faces over a suitably extensive lake. The garden close to the house is open on selected days in summer (telephone for details), but Lord Walpoles' main home nearby, Mannington Hall, is even more worthy of a summer visit for its outstanding collection of roses.

GEORGE PLUMPTRE



Wolterton Park, Erpingham, has fine oaks and an impressive lake

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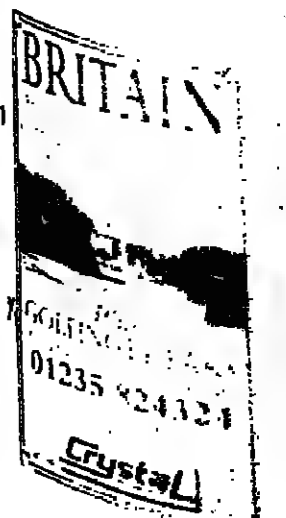
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Pye Corner's traditional frontage hides interior flights of fancy

## The house at Pye Corner

The mullioned windows of this Cotswold home suggest a country idyll but it's not all chintz inside

Driving through the Cotswold village of Broadway, even the most seasoned nomad should feel a sense of homecoming, even if the "home" in question is one of childhood fancy. Joanna Trollope, car ads and Sunday night television murder mysteries.

Once named the "showcase village of England", Broadway boasts the usual table-mat scenes: golden stone, leaded windows, rambling hills and peaceful, walled gardens.

The Worcestershire village is best known by the older generation as the home of the late car-crazy parliamentarian Sir Gerald Nabarro, and by younger couples for the Lygon Arms Hotel: the perfect venue for weekend breaks and discreet affairs.

At first sight, the House at Pye Corner conforms to this idyll, transporting you to a fictional past where small boys wear horn-rimmed spectacles, scurry for apples and eat steaming pies: a time when village bushops with jangly doors serve buns from daily-baked cake stands, and humble country folk hold hands and sing carols around the tree.

Pye Corner sits on the edge of the village, on what is thought to be its

original Broadway. Believed to date from the 17th and late 18th century, the house is approached by a sweeping driveway leading to a courtyard and side entrance.

Peering through the stone-mullioned windows from outside, welcoming wood fires burn in the grates, casting a wonderful orange light on chartered and stopped beams. Once inside, heavy oak doors scream to be hid behind, and cold quarry tiles insist that you remember your slippers.

The previous owner, the former managing director of Endsleigh Insurance, died last year. He had definite ideas about restoration and redecoration, and on closer inspection his personal touches break with the chocolate-box idyll.

Pye Corner is about as far from an urban interior design as you can go, crammed full of knick-knacks (old engravings on the inglenook, an antique four-poster, positioned next to a 1970s laminated table).

It is fair to say that many of the previous owner's flights of fancy are aesthetic no-nos. Walking into the music room from the traditionally beamed hall is like discovering Top Shop in the basement of Harvey Nichols. Restored by Christopher Boulter, muralist to the

The chocolate-box image is dispensed with in the music room, where murals tell the story of Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène* and cherubs adorn the ceiling. Above: the hallway

stars, painted panels tell the story of Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène*. A painterly slide show charts the life of Helen of Troy, from *The Invocation* to *Venus and The Seduction* through to *The Judgement*. The smudged faces of women with the vital statistics of outsize Sindy dolls smile wearily from the walls.

On the patterned ceiling, unlikely well-endowed cherubs wink as gilt-heavy mirrors reflect the lavish *troupe d'oeil*. The spectacle is enough to make the most dedicated voyeur reach for the Aries.

More in keeping is the fine working kitchen along the hall with traditional terracotta tiled flooring. A gas-fired Aga provides focus, warmth and the promise of hotpots and rice pudding. The previous

owner was a compulsive picker and the pantry is piled high with pots and bell jars ready to preserve fruit and vegetables from the garden. The breakfast room has built-in antique cabinets for ample storage and the dining room is spacious and smart with polished wood floors and an inglenook fireplace.

The drawing room, at the back of the house, has wall timbers, a built-in window seat and a French door to the terrace which looks out over the garden. An open stone fireplace carries a plaster mould of its maker (a local builder who has entered village lore). His full face, pipe and flat cap jut out from the stone canopy.

Upstairs there are six bedrooms

and three bathrooms. The master bedroom has been recently redecorated. The wallpaper and pea-green paintwork was not to my taste, but it is a good size, with beautiful views of the orchard and the rolling Cotswold hills.

A smaller, darker bedroom at the back of the house has a minstrel's gallery, accessible only by ladder: the first place to check when playing hide-and-seek.

Pye Corner has staggering potential. The spacious attic in the eaves cry out to be made into studios, workshops or teenagers' bedrooms. The stables and outbuildings have lain idle for years. To the side of the house lie empty greenhouses and

an intriguing wood store which looks like a hybrid mix of Canadian log cabin and well-built Wendy house.

The two-and-a-half-acre garden is a mishmash of traditional Cotswold and oriental fantasy. Well-kept lawns at the front hint that the gardens have been lovingly restored to their former glory, with bursting flower beds and finely pruned topiary. Yet a half-finished balustrade cuts through the green at the back, signifying the start of the ambitious Japanese-style sunk garden, which reminded me of something Morris McWhirter might have knocked up, complete with ornamental water plants, bridge and fountain.

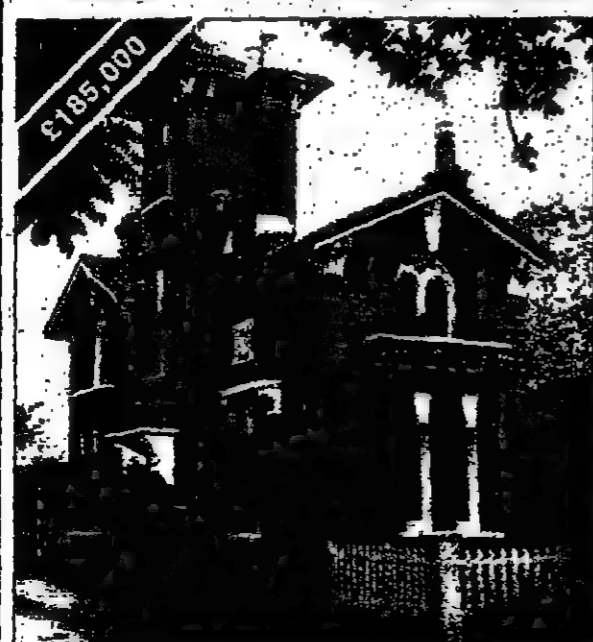
At the back a productive vegetable and flower garden with a peach arch, fruit canes, strawberry, asparagus and vegetable beds. The heated swimming pool is well secluded, perfect for weekend parties. Change in the summer-house, bring out the sun-loungers, shake up some large Martinis and duck and dive in the natural spring water, pumped up from the well.

On the way home, I thought about the dovecote twinkling in the winter sun and developed an urge to load up my imaginary Volvo with family and friends, return to Pye Corner with gloves and apron and start pruning.

ALEX O'CONNELL

Agents: Hampsons in Broadway (01452 852205)

### HOME SWAP



This two-bedroom 19th-century lodge house in Blackheath, south-east London, can be yours for £185,000. Agents: Winlow 0181-852 0899



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In the Tarn at Garonne, south-west France, the same sort of money (£180,000) will stretch to a fully restored Quercy blanc stone farmhouse in 2.5 acres of garden with a swimming pool and a barn for conversion. The six-bedroom, three-bathroom, four-reception room house comes fully furnished and equipped for 12 people, with beautiful views over open countryside. Agents: Dorius Abroad, 0171-431 4892

CHERYL TAYLOR

## Retro living in Seventies heaven

Angie Smith enjoys being in a time warp — her flat is a museum of Biba memorabilia, down to the coffee mugs

Entering Angie Smith's flat in Bethnal Green is a bit like stepping into a film set for *The Avengers* with a few props from *George and Mildred*. Angie is tall and slim with jet-black hair, and usually wears heavy black eye make-up and striking, original Biba clothes.

"My work is not particularly creative so I tend to take out my artistic tendencies on my flat," says Angie. "The late Sixties and early Seventies were the best times of my life. This was a really affluent period, the time for entertaining friends and when *Playboy* was a big influence. It was a decade of go-go girls, Kubrick, sports cars and Cocteau — the 'me' generation. My favourite year was 1970 and I am happy to live it all the time."

Her collection began when she was 15. The main inspiration was her father, who was a dustman in a wealthy area at the time when punk had just taken hold.

The Sixties and Seventies look had become very unfashionable and Angie's father regularly brought home Seventies lamps, artefacts, records and pointed bras on the "special dustcart". Over the years she has acquired one of the largest personal collections of Biba artefacts and clothes in the country and hires them out to film companies.

A few years ago it was fairly easy to find Biba products and other Seventies decor cheaply in markets and second-hand shops. Now a lot of the pieces, such as the tall, curvy Carlton Ware coffee sets and the brightly coloured shattered Perspex coasters and lamp bases have become collectable and expensive.

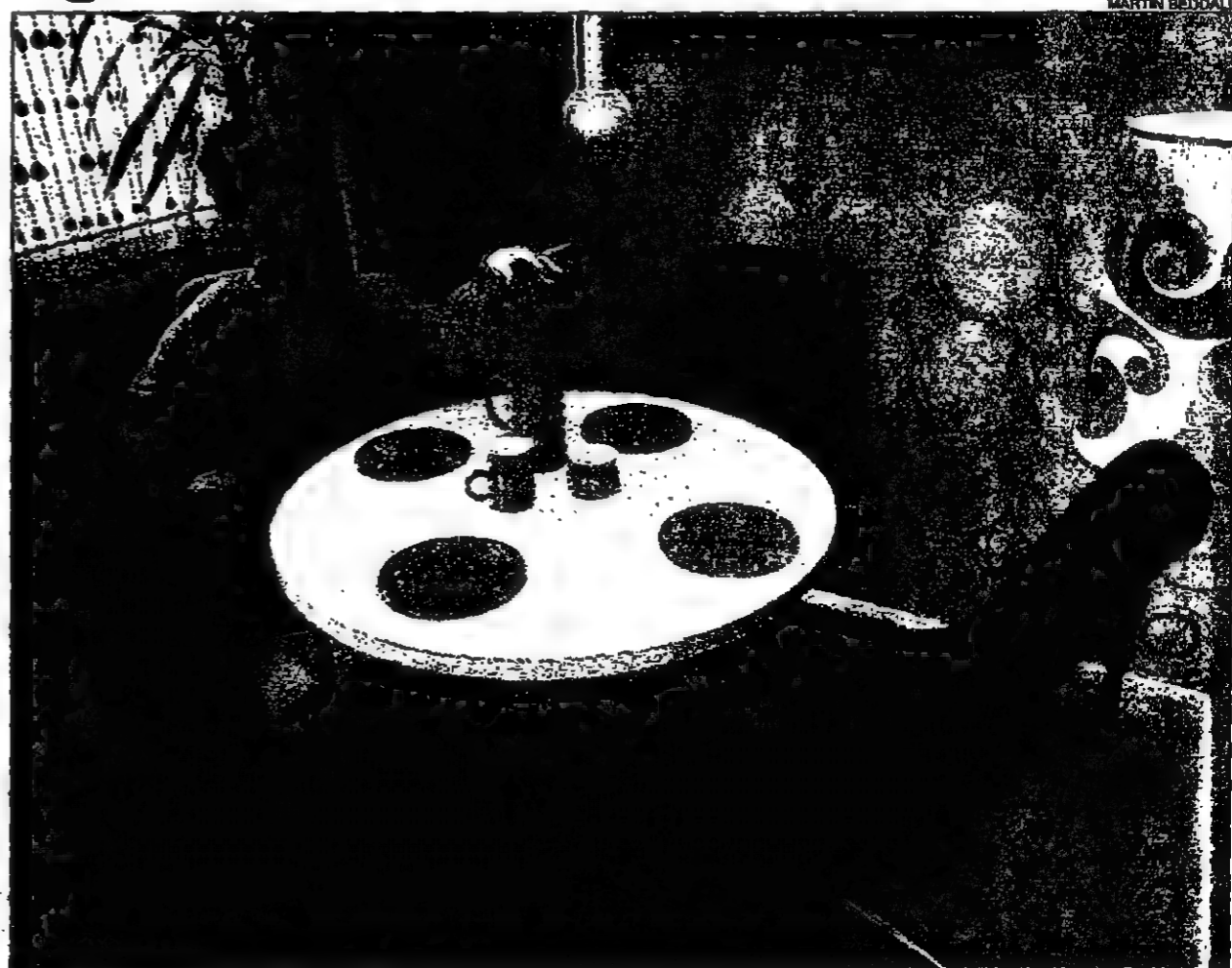
Charity shops and car boot sales are still a good source for Seventies style, and although it has become more popular, it is still possible to pick up black

print curtains, swirly wallpaper and distinctive furniture from that era.

Angie has devoted a lot of her time to the design of her flat. "I have created an environment that I am proud of. It is very personal as I have thought hard about every object and every piece of carpet."

"Nowadays, people don't seem to think about textures or look at a piece of furniture in isolation, but tend to go for an overall look from the pages of an interiors magazine. Too many people in this country have become scared of colour and have hint-of-tint walls with tiny bits of colour such as bright red coffee mugs. It is a bit tricky to match scary colours such as purples and reds as they need to have the same tone, but it is great when you achieve the look you want. I have tried to create a different feel for each room — I like each room to say 'hello' to me."

The overall look is heavily researched and Angie watches period films and reads many books on decorating and collecting Seventies style. She feels it is important to find books that have photos of a house being lived in rather than just showing pieces of furniture. Old copies of *House*



"My favourite year was 1970 and I'm happy to live it all the time," says Angie, who started collecting when she was 15

and *Garden* (available from specialist magazine shops) have proved useful for showing a Seventies house in context. Most houses in the Seventies would still have had pieces from the Sixties and even the Fifties as people did

not go out and buy a complete new range of furniture. The sitting room achieves the young, push-button, modern look of the day with plenty of chrome and glass. The walls are painted beige with tobacco and orange stripes and are decorated with beaten-copper pictures.

The curtains have a bold print of brown and black swirls, and a swinging cane "egg" chair hangs from the ceiling. In the corner is Angie's favourite piece of furniture, a knee-high, orange cylindrical cocktail cabinet. It has pot-holes for the bottles and can be wheeled around at a party with the top being used to hold glasses and canapés.

Through the red, glass-bead door you enter the kitchen with its solid, curved 1953 fridge. Much of the rest of the room pays homage to the Biba food hall. There are mugs, trays and tins, a large array of

jars that once held everything from chickpeas to bicarbonate of soda, all in the distinctive black and gold that Biba used for its logo and motifs. On the walls are the labels from the Biba quiche boxes (one from each of the ten varieties).

The bedroom is designed to have the sensuous, velvety feel of a boudoir. The walls are covered in purple hessian, which has not proved practical as the cat loves to climb the walls and tends to shred it.

The dressing table is completely covered with pots of Biba lotions, shampoo and make-up, including silver face and body paint which was fashionable at the time.

The cupboards are jammed with original Biba outfits (248 to be exact). These range from heavy satin nightdresses and hot pants to a flimsy, empire-line wedding dress and a fake

fur leopard-skin trouser suit. Floppy hats with flowers cover the walls and cupboards. The only room which has yet to receive the treatment is the bathroom. This has proved difficult because bathroom equipment and tiles tend to break and get thrown away when they are taken out of a house. Angie is, however, currently negotiating for a purple bathroom suite.

Angie sadly concedes that she has almost completed the design of her flat.

"The cupboards are overflowing with wallpaper and curtains. I suppose my dream would be to win the lottery and carry on with my collection. I would buy a big Georgian house in Holland Park or Notting Hill and paint it purple on the outside with a turquoise door and window sills."

JOYCE BLAKE

The smallest room in the house is a loo with attitude

هكذا من الاماكن

The Chinese art of creating harmonious homes may be all the rage but it is important to choose advisers carefully

# Beware feng shui phooey

David and Alice wanted a baby. They consulted the doctor but they did not see any harm in consulting a feng shui practitioner too. He came, he saw, he put up a windchime. The couple, now £350 poorer, waited for their lives to become richer.

Nothing happened, however, so they called on Tony Holdsworth of the Midlands Feng Shui Centre in Ettington near Stratford-upon-Avon. He said: "I went with a Chinese master and the windchime was in the wrong place and it was reducing energy when it needed increasing. There was nothing other than a workshop in the area of creativity, and no improvements or suggestions had been made. The real problem was an underground burst sewage pipe in that area. That has been fixed but there is no news yet."

This couple were victims of feng shui phooey and they are not the only ones who have paid good money for bad advice in this trendiest of disciplines. The West has fallen in love with the Chinese art which focuses on the way buildings and interior design affect the well-being and prosperity of the inhabitants. In Britain the trend for creating harmonious homes has gone from New Age fringe to mainstream, with even the likes of Wimpey handing out free guides on the subject.

But this month feng shui is growing up in Britain with two new schools that aim to provide standards and structure for a field that so far has been dominated by the feel-good factor. At last, time is running out for the charlatans and their phooey.

"This kind of course is a must," says Gina Lazenby of the Feng Shui Network in London. "At first there was just a growing awareness of what feng shui is. You know, the 'Gosh, I've got my toilet in the wealth corner and all my money is being flushed away' type of thing. But the awareness is way beyond that now and we need people who know what they are doing and who are professional."

This is easier said than done. Chinese masters select their pupils, who can train for decades before becoming masters. "They would learn throughout their lifetime but cannot practise until they are almost drawing a pension," Ms Lazenby says.

Britain has the opposite problem.

## FACT FILE

A FENG SHUI consultant will charge from £150 for a small flat to £250 to £350 for the average home, depending on size and location. This is not cheap and arranging a consultation should be approached in the same spirit that you would hire a specialist lawyer or accountant.

Most feng shui practitioners are found by word of mouth. Another option would be to ring the Feng Shui Network which can refer you to a consultant.

Ask how long your consultant has been practising and how they were trained. Ask for references and follow them up.

At no point should you feel as if the wool is being pulled over your eyes. Gina Lazenby of the Feng Shui Network advises that no one should hire a practitioner they do not feel right about.

Chanting and robes may be fine, but feng shui consultants should also show an awareness of electromagnetic stress, geopathic stress (what is going on underneath your house) and look at the street layout and the outside of your house.

The practitioner should ask about you and your life (including your birth date) and also show an interest in the history of the house and who lived there before.

Some consultants use a Chinese compass or *lo pan* and some do not. If you want a traditional Oriental practitioner, employ someone who uses a *lo pan*. If you are not sure, ask the practitioner about it. Do not let anyone blind you with the science of it.

If the practitioner gives you a list of changes, ask about them.

The number of feng shui consultants here has leapt from a handful several years ago to up to 50 or more. Some are not experienced enough to be practising and it is instructive that the Feng Shui Network only has ten consultants on its books that it will recommend. Tony Holdsworth is even more selective, believing that only a few practitioners here have the expertise to practise.

The reason behind this difference of opinion lies in the nature of feng shui and how some have adapted it



Derek Walters, a feng shui expert, rearranges his garden

Involving yourself in the process gives you more understanding of what is going on.

Lots of people expect feng shui to solve all their problems overnight but in many cases changes are not made all at once.

If you make the changes and

nothing happens or things get worse, ring your practitioner. Gina Lazenby believes most problems stem from poor communication. The practitioner should be happy to discuss the situation and to make further suggestions.

Shui Handbook. "There is a real need for this. I teach a similar course in Germany and have advanced students there," Mr Walters says. "They show me examples of their practical work and they know more about feng shui than others who are charging and working as consultants in Britain."

Like many in Britain, Ms Lazenby stumbled on feng shui by accident when she took a course from William Spear, the American guru of "intuitive feng shui". She set up the network and, in the past

few years, has experienced the boom in the subject first hand with the phones "going crazy". Some 10,000 calls later, she decided the time was right to use her contacts to set up a "professional" course.

Ms Lazenby says feng shui is not a purely Oriental practice. "I see it not as a Chinese thing but as something that is universal. I want to see how we can use it in England, in Scotland, in our semi-detached houses, in our cottages. The *lo pan* compass takes a long time to learn. But there is another way of doing it which is based on intuition. Neither is wrong or right."

Her course, to be held in central London, includes teachers from Australia and America and covers such diverse subjects as electromagnetic stress, feng shui in the kitchen, and children.

"It has to have real value and not be just a few cheap courses put together. I have to balance credibility, professionalism and affordability," she says.

The course involves 50 classes over two to three years. It will cost from £5,000 to £7,000 and graduates may become eligible to go on to the network's consultant registry.

"When this field becomes regulated — and it will be one day — then we will need information in filing cabinets and case studies to show we have done our homework," Ms Lazenby says.

Any consultant worth his or her £150 a session should bring a wealth of experience to your home. They should be knowledgeable about Chinese astrology, geopathic stress and ask lots of questions about the history of your house and your life. Ideally, they will bring you into the process and be available afterwards for follow-up.

"If you have a question, ring them up," Ms Lazenby says. "It's in nobody's interest for something to be half-done." Unfortunately, some, like David and Alice, have learnt that the hard way.

ANN TRENEMAN

Details of Gina Lazenby's course are available from the Feng Shui Network International, PO Box 2133, London W1A 1RL (0171-935 8935).

For information on Tony Holdsworth's programme, contact the School of Feng Shui, Vocational Training Course, 34 Banbury Road, Ealing, W5 2JF (0181 740 116).

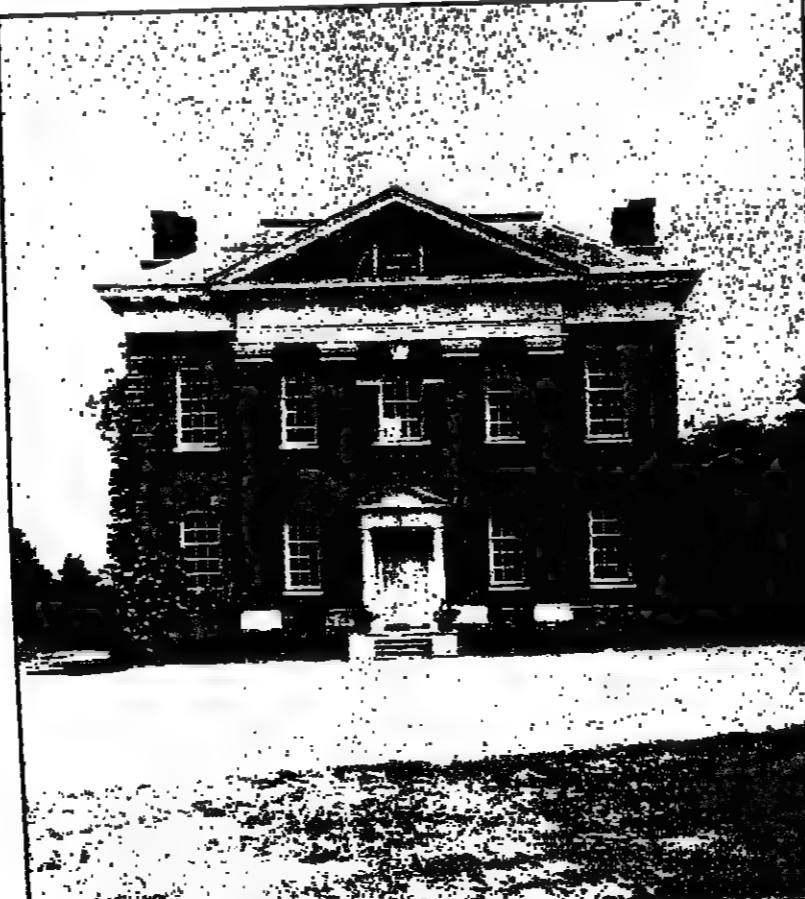


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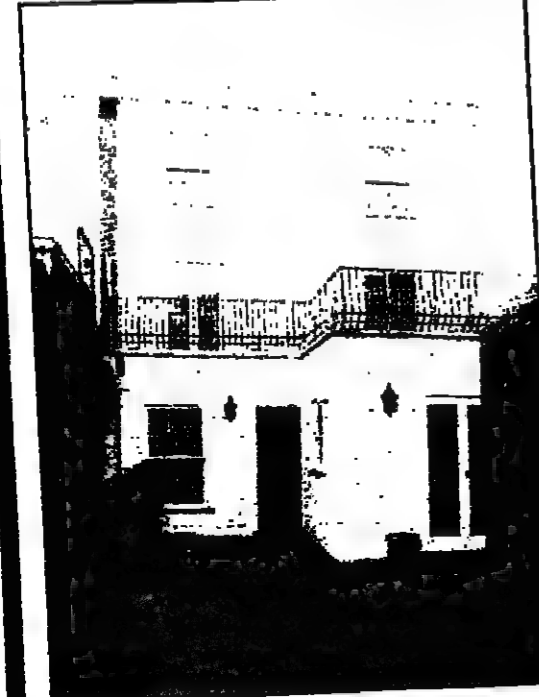
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Hordle, Near Lymington  
With permission to extend, a Grade II listed period cottage in pretty gardens. 2 beds, bath, sitting/dining rm, study area, kt, cloak, detached chalet, garage, south facing garden.  
Price Guide: £134,995  
LYMINGTON: 01590 677233



## GETTING TRIPPING

Sherlock Holmes's study, recreated above for a television programme, suggests integrity and a wordly air

surface, storage and (a degree of) privacy. Ideally, you want an area away from family traffic. Aim to confine the working area to one corner or side. Otherwise, you will have to clear away everything each time the room is needed for its other purpose; a disincentive to work in the first place and not good for family harmony.

Do not overlook the space under the bedroom window or that corner alcove on the landing. However, unless you thrive on chaos and interruptions, kitchen tables are not a good idea — no matter that it did no harm to Mrs Ashtley.

Working areas can look messy and ugly, particularly if computers and faxes are flashing their ugly rears from the corner of an elegant living room. Simple screens, even an artful arrangement of plants, can cover their modesty. Equally, if the rest of the

room distracts from your work — a double bed in the bedroom, for example — arrange your working area to look away from the room. (Alternatively, get a hard and unsexy-looking futon.)

Working areas need not look like the office. There is no hard and fast rule that says you cannot keep folders and files in a mahogany tallboy or antique armoire.

**A** desk can be an old pine table, a length of shelving fitted into an alcove or a hinged surface that folds away against the wall, perhaps sited under a window sill to give you the added bonus of a view.

Bookshelves can be built around and over doorways, while open shelves of unattractive boxfiles and directories

panelled doors or a simple pull-down blind. With careful planning, and a good carpenter, you can hide an entire workstation behind fitted or folding doors. A sliding, pull-out shelf can hold a computer keyboard and double as a working surface. Variable width shelves and drawers can accommodate books, files, stationery, even a fax and a printer.

Close the doors and the bedroom/dining/living room reverts to normal. Where working space is tight or windowless, lighting is important. If there is no room for a desk lamp, consider recessed ceiling lighting or a concealed strip-light fitted to an overhead shelf.

If space really defeats you, there is always the garden shed. It did no harm to Roald Dahl.

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مذاكرات



'Women barely contemplate seeing one another unless food is involved, diet or no diet... but men do it only when they're very, very drunk'

## Making a meal of friendship

LIFE AND SOUL



GINNY DOUGARY

Just what is it about the idea of dinner that is so threatening to the average heterosexual male? Is the word forever associated with a schmaltzy vision of candlelight, romance, single rose in vase and Mantovani strings? There has to be a reason why my friends wouldn't dream of meeting *à deux* in a restaurant, let alone risk getting together over a bowl of pasta and a bottle of wine in each other's homes.

The other day I suggested to my husband that he invite one of his friends round, as a pleasant deviation from their usual pint-in-pub-post-coffee male-bonding session. What a reaction. In his mind's eye, he had clearly transformed himself into a mincing *Cage aux Folles* houseboy.

However interesting the differences are between the sexes, I have never quite been able to bring myself to read those gender-gone berserkers, which all appear to have been written by Americans with degrees in socio-psycholinguistics — *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* and *Why don't you understand me, you great big banana-*

head; women yuck, men talk back, or words to that effect.

Perhaps if I had done, I would now understand why men will eat together only at night if they're under the age of 30, very very drunk, and in somewhere resolutely unromantic, such as a brightly lit Lebanese take-away, or an indifferent curry house under a winking neon sign: "Lager Louts Most Welcome Here!"

Women, on the other hand, will barely contemplate seeing one another — diet or no diet — unless food is involved. This is why restaurants are full of females — often in twosomes — day or night, because, although we have no qualms about cooking for one another, it's quite fun to escape the domestic scene, to dress up a bit, eat delicious food and be waited on. This way, you don't have to worry about the washing-up or the reciprocal invitation, or the child waking up just as you've got to a particularly succulent

morsel of gossip. Male friendship, it seems to me, is completely different from female friendship, and I don't quite see the point of it. The girlie date is a rewarding bumper-pack of the confessional, therapy and careers advice session all rolled up in one. You emot. You whinge. You bitch. You ruminate. You beat your breast. You laugh a lot, and order another bottle of wine.

Friendship between women is all about intimacy: the sharing and off-loading of feelings. It is the pleasure of moving from epic events on the world

stage to the miniature dreams of one's own life. It is both a liberation and deeply sustaining. I can't imagine life without it.

Women are promiscuous with their friendship. We let down our guard for each other, old pals and new, at the drop of a hat. For us, it is an effortless trajectory from small talk to big talk and back

cherishing, cocooning idea of friendship at all.

Now, whether our husbands and partners would benefit if their friendships were more like our own is an interesting point. It could be argued that if they were able to indulge in a little more soul-searching with one another it might take the heat off their primary relationships.

But I have to say that the women in my circle (and I include myself) are not noticeably undemanding because of our deep and meaningful, fabulous friendships with one another.

Why is it that women and men bond with their own sex in such different ways? I remember, years ago, reading about some psychological tests that were carried out on children — boys and girls were paired off by gender, and left alone together, two at a time. The boys set to

work, happily building Lego blocks together or making model aeroplanes, and hardly exchanged a word. The girls, in marked contrast, started chatting about their families, whether their favourite doll was Cindy or Tracy, and hardly paused for breath.

The conclusion was that very early on, boys slipped into doing things together, while what the girls like to do was talk to one another.

Perhaps that's why men like meeting somewhere neutral and hloke-ish, with lots of distracting things to do in case the conversation dries up. An old-fashioned pub is ideal — darts, snooker table, mega-sized television screen — a haven from feminine frippery; somewhere safely, reassuringly male, with a whiff of the barracks or the locker room.

It's a funny thing. Modern Man can change a nappy. Modern Man can cope with his wife earning more than him. Modern Man can cook, clean and hug a tree. But Modern Man wouldn't be seen dead eating in a brasserie with his best friend after dark. Dinner must be the last frontier.

## Who says I need a husband?

Even in the 1990s, families are pressurising single women to get married, says Adrian Mourby

Population figures tell us that there are slightly more men in Britain than women these days — and yet far more of the women seem to be single. Unless we are a nation of bigamists, this doesn't make sense: but it's true that *Blind Date* attracts three times as many gorgeous girls as fellaes, and agony columns are either full of women wondering if they'll ever find a partner, or of women wishing that their families would stop wondering if they'll ever find a partner.

We may all have squirmed while watching *Pride and Prejudice's* Mrs Bennet push her daughters on to Mr Collins and Mr Bingley, but Mary Hooper, 36, a script executive who works for various London production companies, says the pressure is still there today. By Jane Austen's standards, she would be on the shelf by now. After all, Anne Elliott in *Persuasion* was virtually beyond redemption at 27. In her twenties, Mary didn't think much about settling down, nor did many of her colleagues. "But as you approach 30 you get paranoid that everyone is pointing out how you're single and they're not. I did go through a phase of feeling defensive. If I was invited round to dinner with other couples, I used to get steamed up about the fact that they spent all evening talking about their marriages and children, and yet if they invited me round with other single people I used to feel that they were having a 'be kind to singles' night."

Mary moved in with her boyfriend within a year of leaving college and split up with him when she was 28. "I think that made being 30 hard

to take but the good thing has been that there are lots of other people in the same boat. I don't know whether it's a London thing but there are so many women building their own lives and supporting each other, and I like that. It might be difficult in a smaller place where everyone is in couples."

Suzi Bloxham lives in such a place. She is an art teacher who lives in Shropshire and readily describes herself as single. Although Suzi is only 27, she recognises, like Anne Elliott, that marriage is becoming the norm among her friends. "Suddenly there were all these weddings and I realised that more than half the people I knew, probably 60 per cent, were getting married — and I was always the bridesmaid."

But Suzi didn't go down this route. "I had a boyfriend when I left college but I'd got the chance of this really good job as head of art in Shropshire and that was what I wanted to go for."

At 22, Suzi moved from Bath to a small school on the Welsh border and, of necessity, embraced an independent lifestyle, which has been a challenge but a thoroughly enjoyable one.

Although she has lots of male friends, Suzi has noticed of late that they're all married. "All my single friends seem to be women!" she says. "But it's not a big issue. I don't mind being called Miss and I tick the box marked 'single' quite happily."

At 27, Suzi doesn't have that awful anxiety about her biological clock ticking away, which can plague some older women. The greatest problem she finds with being single is not having anyone to talk to when she gets home. "My phone bill is not a pretty sight but I'm fortunate working



Suzi Bloxham, 27, with a portrait of her grandmother. "She's always saying she doesn't want to see me left on the shelf or that it's her dearest wish to see me settled"

with other teachers because they're all caring and interested people and I feel I've made lots of friends up here."

Having turned down one proposal of marriage, Suzi isn't worried that she'll never find a long-term partner. But this is something that Mary has had to come to terms with.

"The first thing to remember is that it's not the worst thing that can happen to you," she says. "When I see some of my girlfriends with their husbands and children I stop and think, would I really change places with them? They never seem to get any sleep or have any time to themselves. And as for sex, to hear them talk you'd think that all that stopped years ago. Maybe I always come back to an empty flat afterwards, but at least I get to

do what I want." Seven years of independence have left Mary unsure that she could ever live with anyone else. "I'm so clear how I want to live my life now that I can't see myself making that kind of space for anyone else again. I'd love to have children, but not at any price."

Suzi is still young enough to laugh at the problems of not having a Mr Darcy or Captain Wentworth in tow. "These days when I go to weddings I notice people don't quite know what to do with a single woman who's not a bridesmaid. I find I get put on the 'bits and pieces' table. I don't mind that, but there have been one or two weddings which I've been surprised not

to be invited to. I can only think that's because I didn't fit in with the seating plan." Fortunately, her family has shown no great concern to marry her off. "All except my gran. I'm very close to her but she will keep saying things like she doesn't want to see me 'left on the shelf' or that it's her dearest wish to see me 'settled'."

Sometimes she even tells me that she's met this really nice young man and I just know what she's thinking! Fortunately, I've always been able to talk to her and so I explain that I just haven't found anyone I want to settle down with yet. It simply isn't a problem."

But if Suzi is still unmarried in ten years, she may not feel so sure. The problem for her and for Mary is the same as it was for all of Jane Austen's

heroines. The world is full of couples and their values dominate our society, Mary says: "If you let yourself get sensitised to it you see it everywhere. Couples on adverts, on TV, even magazines for single women seem to be

all about how to get yourself someone. There was a time when I was very hard on my parents. I used to get irritated if they started fishing for information but I think I'm more relaxed these days. Most women do have long-term

partners and it's silly to pretend otherwise. But that doesn't necessarily make them happier."   
 Adrian Mourby's latest novel, *The Four of Us*, was published this week (Hodder, £17.99).

Ruth Gledhill joins a Docklands congregation as members reflect on their marriage vows

## Baptists for better or worse



THIS community centre, built 100 years ago as a centre for dockers, mirrors the sweeping changes that have enveloped London's docklands in the last decade. The Quaystone church meets in the tiny, pink-walled chapel built on the top of the centre, reached through a series of doorways, corridors and an almost-Italianate paved ornamental garden.

Its revival under the helmanship of the Rev Steve Hill, the enthusiastic 31-year-old Baptist minister who has built the congregation up from four people meeting in a living room, is such that the chapel is now almost too small for the 50 or so regular worshippers. At our service they included a doctor and his family, painters and decorators and office workers from nearby Canary Wharf. Remarkably, almost all were in their thirties or younger. Tiny children sat at their feet, until they were taken to a separate room for Sunday school. We were within striking distance of the City of London but it could have been a missionary outpost in a distant land. There was a strong sense of the type of gritty, pioneering spirit normally associated with the American west. We were at the end of the first ever National Marriage



Rousing music at the Quaystone

Week. Bishops had been warning of the dangers to society of treating marriage as disposable, and urging couples to invest more time and energy in maintaining their marriages. Hundreds of couples throughout the country had been to services to renew their marital vows of lifelong fidelity.

But at this service, Mr Hill decided not to have a renewal of vows. In a bid to reflect the society around him, he decided to concentrate instead on the difficulties which can lead to separation and divorce. After a lot of singing, prayers and listening to a

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**MINISTER:** The Rev Steve Hill  
**SERMON:** Could be summed up as: If crossed in love, don't get cross. Turn to the Cross. ★★★★★

**ARCHITECTURE:** Refurbished old chapel, like the surrounding Docklands a strange blend of old and new. ★★

**MUSIC:** Modern and traditional. ★★

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couple describe their coming visit to the east on a missionary project to tackle child prostitution, Mr Hill preached on anger and conflict. What he had to say could be applied to any relationship, not just a marital one, he said. Speaking as someone who has been married for six years, he described taking his wife out for a meal on Valentine's Day.

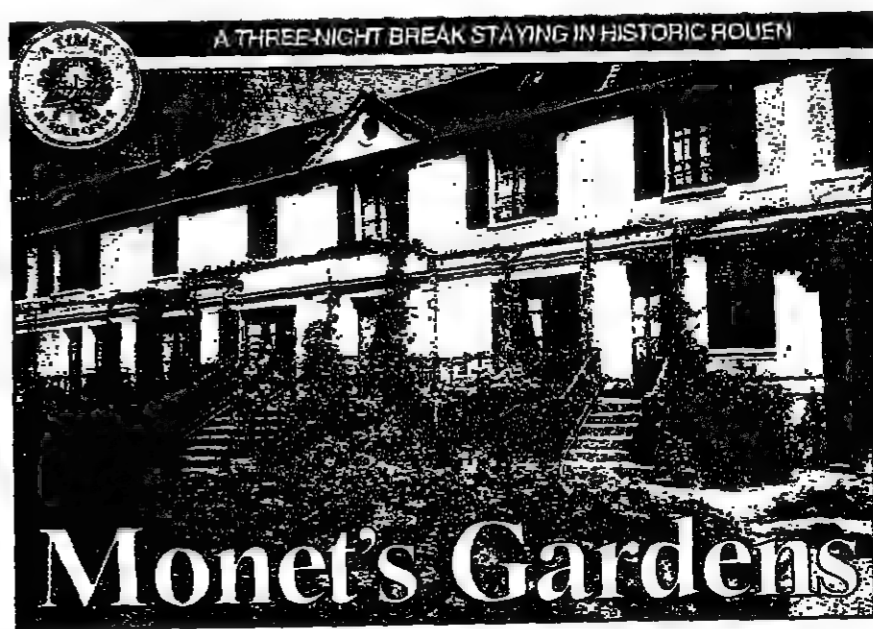
After driving fruitlessly around London looking for somewhere to eat (everywhere was fully booked) he found a restaurant with a table but waited 30 minutes for the starter. He and his wife had a row. "She was upset that I

had not booked and reminded me of our honeymoon," he said. "We went for a day out in Paris and ended up on the *periphérique* and couldn't find our way off it. I blamed Alison because she couldn't read a map. It ended with her getting out of the car and walking off. I drove off and only then realised I was on this one-way system and had no way to get back."

It all ended happily, he reported. "But I am just saying this to show that even on our honeymoon, we were a couple with rows as a natural part of our relationship. But it has not been six years of rows." Conflict in a relationship does not mean that relationship should never have been. "Conflict and arguments are there to help us grow and mature and become more like Christ."

He quoted from Ephesians 4:26: "Don't let the sun go down on anger." He continued: "The Bible says relationships should be characterised by peace." He warned against repression or explosion as methods of dealing with anger. Instead, measured confrontation was the answer, outlined in Proverbs 15:1: "A gentle answer turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger."

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The East Alligator escarpment in Kakadu (above) guards a wilderness of stunning beauty containing a multitude of wildlife in the swamps of the Yellow Waters (below) and sustaining the ancient hunting lifestyle of the Aborigines

## Up a gum tree in croc country

Australia's 'Top End' is one of the last truly unspoilt wildernesses in the world. Adrian Hamilton samples the serenity of life by the billabong

They take crocodiles seriously in the top end of Australia, particularly the estuarine saltwater beasts, the "salties" of film fame. These can grow to 30-odd feet, live to be 100 years old and can take a buffalo and, holding him by the nose, drag him under the water.

Not that any human has actually been taken by a croc in the Northern Territories since 1987. But with a couple of dozen saltwater and freshwater crocs to every kilometre (or "ks" as the Australians call them) and some 100 fished out of Darwin Harbour alone during the year, nobody is taking any chances.

Nor can they afford to. The hunters and the farmers may rage against the "greenies" and their conservation policy that preserves all the nasties. But the quarter-million tourists and backpackers come mainly for the wildlife.

And what a wildlife there is. Kakadu National Park to the south of Darwin is the largest wetlands conservation area in the world, a park the size of Wales with the complete ecology of the estuarine system from mangrove swamps to paper-bark gum trees (surely one of the most beautiful and diverse species of tree in the world) to rainforest, woodland and granite ranges.

We were there at the end of the dry season in October when the water had retreated to the main rivers and a series of permanent lakes, or billabongs, around which the wildlife concentrated in astonishing proximity and abundance. The locals argue that the wet season, when the plains are flooded and everything is unbelievably green and growing, is even more beautiful, even if the wildlife is more dispersed.

To add to all this — an intrinsic part of it, indeed — there is the Aboriginal art, painted with ochre, spontaneity, surprise and mystery on innumerable caves and the rock overhangs of the escarpment that confines the estuary.

Some of the paintings are more than 20,000 years old according to the guides — as much as 150,000 according to new discoveries and dating techniques announced last autumn. This caused considerable doubt in the academic community and an outburst of nationalist fervour in the press, eager to reaffirm not just Australia's uniqueness but also its superiority in age and progress to Europe.

The prehistoric and the indigenous — flora, fauna and ancient culture — are what Australian eco-tourism is all about, particularly in the Northern Territories which is trying to build its holiday trade on a total view of environmental or "interpretive" tourism.

Only opened up to exploration within this century and to settlement much more recently, the "Top End" remains still an unspoilt wilderness trod for literally tens of thousands of years by one of the most ancient peoples in the world. What makes Australia so exciting, is that their way of hunting and gathering are still going on — just.

You can turn your head from examining startlingly fresh rock paintings of stick-like humans and carefully delineated geese and snakes and then look out across the plains, the forests of dozens of different species of eucalyptus (Australia has more than 200) and the bird-filled billabongs. They are unaltered since the original painters had marked the spot and signalled the game in prehistoric times.

You can also look around and see a people pushed aside by a Western tide that has destroyed their social units, introduced them to alcohol with devastating results and made them subject to a degree

of racial prejudice of quite astonishing openness among the older Australian Whites.

Guilt and new appreciation have led in Australia to the development of a policy of environmental correctness and retrospective recompense that is sometimes bizarre in its consequences. The Northern Territories is inhabited by less than 1 per cent of Australia's population, some 175,000 people, and covers a sixth of its land with an area the size of Britain and France combined. Of that nearly half is owned by the Aborigines.

Most of the wilderness at the Top End belongs to the local peoples and is leased to the government national parks administration and tourist operators. They bring in the visitors whose fees are then used to keep the Aborigines in a dependency economy, meant to preserve their hunting and gathering lifestyles free of the corruption that money always brings. Kakadu is owned by

the Aborigines and shaped like a crocodile. But for a long time its largest hotel, the Gagadju in the uranium mining town of Jabiru, would not allow Aborigines into the dining room because their dress and habits upset the guests.

Anyone is allowed into the Kakadu and other national parks so long as they keep away from sacred sites and forbidden art locations. Only a few, and then at a price, are allowed into the surrounding Aboriginal tribal lands.

The masses visit the national parks in camper vans or just with sleeping bags or "swags", and plenty of water (essential in the hot season — and don't wade into the billabongs to refill if you don't want to become lunch for a saltillo). The wealthier stay in the luxury hotels and — particularly if they are American or German — fish in areas where conservation policies have made the game plentiful and ready to be caught.

Seven Spirit Bay, a luxury hotel on the Cobourg Peninsula at the northern tip of Arnhem Land, for example, has octagonal open-sided bedrooms under open sky that fulfil every dream of melding into the wilderness. On the other hand, it can only be reached by small aircraft and costs more than £200 per person a day/night visit.

As a multimillionaire septuagenarian complained: how could they restrict his luggage to get on the biplane? After much argument, he left three suitcases but insisted on bringing one essential piece of equipment — his exercise bike.

And yet our stay at the hotel was idyllic — good food, well organised walks, fine views of the sea. Oh, how one longed for a quick dip if one could only brave the crocs or the killer box jellyfish that come in for the wet season.

There are plenty who will tell you with a knowing nod how the only "real" experience is in going to the Aboriginal Arnhem Land and the tribal areas that surround Kakadu. But then you would miss the glories of the wetlands and Kakadu, a huge area with plenty of space to roam and — like American national parks — a ranger system that is there for the ordinary citizen. There is no snobbery among Australians. The backpacker is well catered for.

However, if you can afford the time and the money to take a trip into Arnhem Land with the small number of four-wheel-drive tours that take up

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The undeveloped nature of this region makes it a wonderful place for the genuine traveller to explore. The whole vast area offers a cornucopia of natural world delights on a scale seldom witnessed anywhere else in the world including the tidal phenomenon at the Montgomery Reef, the horizontal waterfalls near Talbot Bay, the hundreds of islands in the Buccaneer Archipelago, the gorges of the Mitchell, King George and Prince Rupert Rivers, the fertile Ord River Valley and Lake Argyle.

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sunsets. But it is for the outback that one comes to Australia — particularly in the Northern Territories.

This state stretches from the tropics in the north to the "red heart" of central Australia at Alice Springs, a couple of thousand miles south. Staying on the land is the only way to feel it.

Down in the south we stayed in Bond Springs Station, a century-old, 750,000-acre property outside Alice Springs. Here the round-up is done by helicopter; the boilerman had been flown up from Melbourne to install the Aga, shipped directly from England (within a few hours he had embarked on a fling with the girl from the abattoir); the election officials had come with a portable cardboard voting booth to make sure everyone did their democratic duty (the right-wing National Party candidate was an Aboriginal made good in his people); and the guide on the prison service and was objecting to more handouts for his people; and the guide on a breathtaking night of bird-watching was a former Gurkha officer from Zimbabwe.

However, the other property we stayed in at El Questro Station, in the north of Western Australia, was a luxury

homestead on a million-acre ranch owned by an Old Etonian. You could stay in accommodation ranging from tents to cabins or the owner's ranch house perched spectacularly above a gorge. The landscape was red rock, with scattered minerals (you can chip away in what they call "fossicking" where there is a permit), hot springs and the primeval shapes of the baobab trees.

The property's "native guide" turned out to be a highly decorated part-Afghan veteran of the Vietnam War and the cattle driver called Buddy with a pair of bowed legs you could drive a "mob" of cows through. A genuine stockman, he made his living by appearing in rodeos with two six-shooters or a whip ("the Genuine Aboriginal Cowboy from Australia" as they billed him in the United States) and also modelling jeans in fashion shoots.

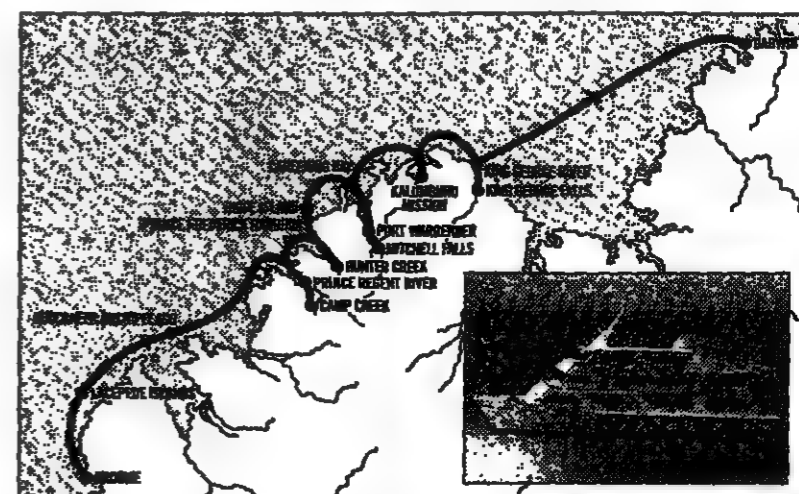
"They had us there, me and three models" he recalled, pointing to a big rock in the river. "And the photographer said 'Buddy, for heaven's sake don't tell the girls there's crocs in the river'. So I did nothing as the girls splashed in the water. But I did make sure my mate kept a rifle under a blanket close by."

"I told him: 'If anything moves in the water, don't wait. Just blast it.' By God, they were angry when I told them about it after."

The author was a guest of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission.

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■ Northern Territory Tourist Commission, Beaumont House, Lambton Road, London SW20 0LW 0181-944 2992.

■ The Travel Portfolio Limited, 73 Churchgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1RL 01284 762253, offers tailor-made tours to northern Australia: example, ten days from £922 per person, based on two sharing, including economy flights and three-star hotels.

■ Singapore Airlines 0181-747 0007 flies from London to Darwin, via Singapore, from £704. Qantas 0345 747767 flies from London to Darwin via Singapore from £757.

■ Bus and four-wheel-drive tours can be arranged by the Darwin Region Tourist Association, 35 South Street Mall 089 814 300. Kakadu Air Services, Darwin, runs flights to Kakadu and tours, including one-day tours into Arnhem Land. Stays in Arnhem Land can be organised in Darwin from about AS\$50 (£141) a night.

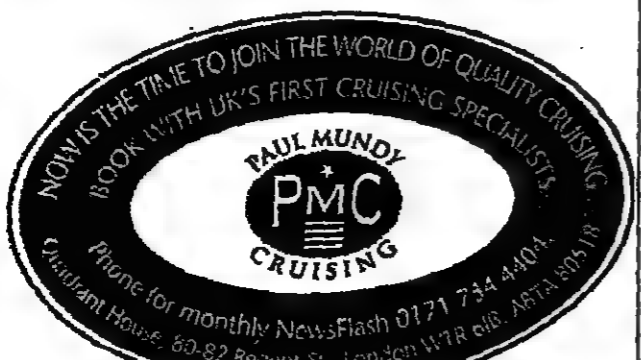


■ Accommodation at Seven Spirit Bay (89 790 277) costs from AS\$299 per person a night to high season (April 1-Oct 31) or from AS\$249 low season (Nov 1-Mar 31). Includes three meals a day and cost of an access permit to Aboriginal lands.

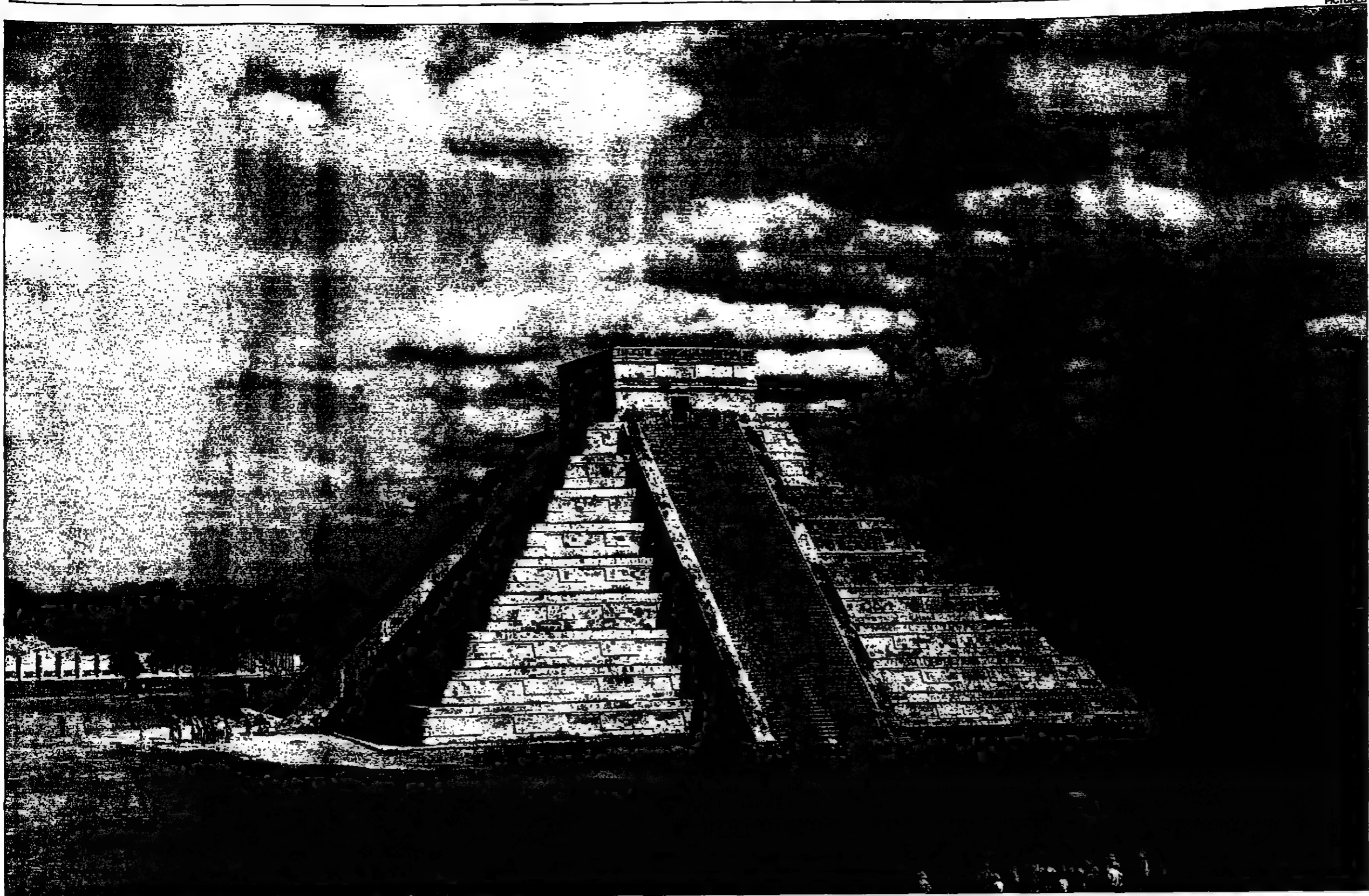
■ El Questro resort, PO Box 904, Kununurra, Western Australia 6743 0191 614 318 costs AS\$640 per person a night at the homestead, AS\$60 in the bungalow base and AS\$45 in the tented cabin accommodation at the Emma Gorge Resort. Tours, and fishing trips extra.

■ Prices at Ayers Rock are from AS\$23 per room at the Outback Pioneer Hotel to AS\$34 for a standard room at the Luxury Sails in the Desert Hotel (Ayers Rock Resort Central Reservations, Sydney 2360 9099). Scenic flights, AS\$60.

■ The Travel Bookshop 0171-229 5260 recommends: Australia — Northern Territory Aboriginal Art, by Wally Carvera (Thames and Hudson, £6.95). The Songlines, by Bruce Chatwin (Picador, £6.99). Northern Territory (Lonely Planet, £8.99).



# Mexico: At sea, treasures of the reef Jacques Cousteau revealed; on land, ancient architectural heritage...



The temple at Chichén Itzá, the greatest testament to Mayan expertise in mathematics, astronomy, sculpture, architecture, and construction, was an the principal place of pilgrimage for Mayas from throughout Central America

## Diving with the god of the Mayas

### COZUMEL FACT FILE

■ Continental Airlines (0800 776464) flies to Cozumel via an overnight stop in Houston from £605 return. British Airways (0345 222111) flies from Heathrow or Gatwick to Miami (overnight stop) from £367 return connecting with Mexicana Airways to Cozumel from £154 return.

■ The Hotel Presidente Inter-Continental (0345 581444 local rate in UK) is Cozumel's only five-star hotel. Its 1997 charges are from £58 per room, including tax. Lower priced hotels are found in the island's only town. Check with the Mexican Tourist Office (0171-734 1058) for details.

■ Global Travel Club (01268 541732) custom designs holidays in the Yucatan from £1,345 per person for seven days to £1,800 for 14 days, depending on standard of accommodation and services required. Flying from the UK, Cathy Mathos Mexican Tours/Mexicana Airlines (0171-254 2550) also offers personalised Yucatan tours from £1,200.

According to Mayan legend the Caribbean island of Cozumel 12 miles off Mexico's Yucatan peninsula was the home of Ixchel, goddess of love and fertility. Today, it is better known for spectacular diving around the world's second largest coral reef. Above the water, equally spectacular Mayan pyramids and temples are no more than a couple of hours travelling time away.

When I walked through the door of the secluded Hotel Presidente Inter-Continental the concierge greeted me 'by name with a glass of champagne. This is something I could become accustomed to. Below my bedroom's first-floor balcony a xoxo kaaho, a blackbird with a long black beak, anorectic body and long tail, squawks and struts on long spindly legs across a palm-fringed powdery white beach and over to the large swimming pool with connected Jacuzzi, from which it proceeds to drink.

The range and quality of the food in the hotel's two restaurants — the indoor El Arrecife, with panoramic views of the turquoise Caribbean, and the beachside El Caribeño, sheltered beneath a roof thatched with the *hazano* palm to form a Mayan *pajapa* — puncture the first of many preconceptions about Mexico, its limited cuisine. So do the national wines.

But the main attraction for visitors is the reefs, revealed by Jacques Cousteau in 1954. Clemente, one of the PADI divemasters of Scubadu, which operates out of the hotel, suggested I didn't need a wetsuit for the dive to the Santa Rosa Wall. These Mexicans are some tough guys, thought I, it just has to be cold that far down. Wrong again on the second count.

After a 40-minute boat ride from one of the hotel's two piers, we dropped into water with a temperature of 86°F: 90°F below it was only four degrees cooler, warmer than my local



A fisherman hauls in his catch offshore at Yucatan

indoor heated swimming pool. The visibility is so good that the surface seems tantalisingly close, and then you glide over the edge of a white sandy plateau to peer down a vertical wall that disappears into an abyss 3,000ft deep. It's the nearest to a space walk that I've experienced.

The top 10ft of the wall is coral reef riddled with caves, grottoes, and tunnels. Accompanied by large inquisitive yellow-finned and black groupers, we rode the current to explore stunning coral buttresses, still vividly coloured even at this depth. Inside the caves, our torches illuminated giant sea fans amid purple vase, yellow tube, and brown rope sponges, while one long narrow tunnel was lined with blood red sponges.

The second of the two-tank dives took us to the Paradise

cape purple ferns waving in the wind, and a host of others. I stopped to examine a pillar coral, and the first nine inches of a spotted moray emerged snake-like from beneath a ledge and snapped its sharp teeth at my hand.

Each dive is different. All provide a multitude of multicoloured and multi-shaped fishes, corals and sponges. Even snorkelling ten yards out from the hotel beach showed a greater variety of marine life in 20 minutes than had a week's diving in the Aegean Sea. And for those who don't want to wet their feet, a trip in a glass-bottomed boat provides the next best experience.

You can use the air-conditioned luxury of the hotel as a base from which to visit all the principal Mayan sites by day trips. But I opted for a guided tour of the Yucatan peninsula which began at Tulum, the only walled city by the sea that the Mayas built. Its most impressive building is the Castillo, a limestone pyramid topped by a temple, which perches on the highest point on the peninsula, a bluff about 40ft above the beach. The region is very flat.

A recurring motif carved on many of the city's 60 buildings is a god whose legs project from above his head. This is referred to as the Diving God, or the God Descending from

the Sky, or the God of Birth, or... Interpretations of Mayan origins and culture equal the number of investigating archaeologists multiplied by the number of surviving Mayas. This is due primarily to Fray Diego de Landa, second Bishop of Yucatan. With the enlightenment of a Franciscan conquistador, Landa realised that the snake venerated by the Mayas was none other than the serpent who tempted Eve to sin in Paradise. And so he set about exterminating all Mayan writings and traces of their history, and religion.

Fortunately, he failed to destroy the greatest testament to Mayan expertise in mathematics, astronomy, sculpture, architecture, and construction. Chichén Itzá was the principal place of pilgrimage for some 200 Mayan settlements scattered across the Yucatan, Guatemala, Belize, and northern Honduras, although by the 10th century it was dominated by more warlike Toltecs from central Mexico.

A singular advantage of staying at a hotel near Chichén Itzá is that you have about two hours to wander over the site before the coachloads of day trippers arrive. At quarter past eight in the morning I stood alone in the temple of the plumed serpent, Kukulcan, which is

built on top of a pyramid made of nine stacked square platforms of decreasing size such that the slope of the pyramid is exactly 45 degrees.

Below me, two eagles glided over the carpet of jungle that stretches to the horizon in every direction, pierced to the south by the white limestone dome of the Observatory. To the west of the clearing at the foot of the pyramid lies the Temple of the Jaguars, attached to one of the two long, high parallel walls that form the Ball Court. To the east the Temple of the Warriors stands atop a pyramid that rises from the Terrace of a Thousand Columns. And to the north a straight limestone path cuts through the jungle to the Sacred Well, into which sacrificial victims were cast.

From this vantage point it is easy to imagine the power of the priests over the throngs of Mayan pilgrims below, especially at the spring and autumn equinoxes. At sunset on these days the northwestern terraced edge of the pyramid casts an undulating shadow which joins the sculpted serpent's tail at the top of the northern ramp to the serpent's head at the bottom: Kukulcan is descending from his temple.

JOHN HANDS

● The author was a guest of Inter-Continental Hotels.

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... exotica at mealtimes in the southern state of Oaxaca; the pros and cons of taking a resort-style holiday

# Crunch time at lunchtime

They lay heaped on the plate, tried to a dark reddish-brown. It had to be done — a spoonful sprinkled on the tortilla, then swamped with plenty of spicy guacamole, stringy cheese, anything else that might usefully disguise the taste.

If you want to return to Oaxaca, you must eat grasshopper. And after a couple of days in this enticing place there was no question. We chewed the chapulines (actually not bad) and moved on to the more mouthwatering items on the table.

Oaxaca — pronounced Wahaka — is a southeastern state of Mexico with the reputation of being culturally fascinating but a poor relation. The national Government worries about occasional rebellious eruptions, but visitors do not.

If your ideas of Mexico are largely confined to Zapata moustaches, revolutions and the writing of Graham Greene, you should not be put off. Greene may have hated Mexico's poverty and corruption but Oaxaca does not figure in his marvellous novel *The Power and the Glory*. Nonetheless, when you enter the stupendous gold interior of the church of Santo Domingo and are exhorted to "remember the needy", the Catholic dilemmas of the novel come to mind.

"One of the most extravagantly gorgeous churches in the world," said Aldous Huxley. We just sat in the pews and gawped. A brief unseasonal shower fell outside and men working on the restoration of a dusty convent next door smiled. This was December and it was the first rain since August.

Oaxaca city, the eponymous capital of the state, is a delight at Christmas. The zocalo, or central square, is the focal point of the city — actually more of a middle-sized town, with no tall buildings or wide boulevards — and it buzzes at all hours with stall-holders selling rugs, brightly painted wooden carvings, black pottery, leather goods, jewellery, hideous Nativity figures, steaming tamales and bewitching varieties of sweets. One man holding a very thin nib offers: "I write your name on a grain of rice" (irresistible for children with our surname). Women pass with trays piled high with *goyorias*, walnut and burnt sugar cakes.

Oaxaca is good at markets. Near the zocalo, around the Basílica de la Soledad, stalls stretch down steps, round corners, on and on, mixing with funfair rides. At the Plaza de la Danza, 30 flavours of ice cream were on sale.

Another day we headed off for the market of markets at Ocotlán, 20 miles out of Oaxaca city. Prices seem to be the same for tourists as for locals. People are friendly and do not get difficult if you do not buy. You can spend hours just walking and looking at the produce. Piles of bulging or emaciated chilies, dried hibiscus flowers, green-feathered toucan heads (the birds are trapped by putting glue on the trees), spring onions the size of billiard balls, goat skins. Even when I discovered that my



50 miles

wallet had been lifted it was not too upsetting. Back in Oaxaca that evening there was a Nativity procession in the zocalo led by a young Mary on a beautiful donkey. We crunched past the *bulwies* stalls where you eat fried corn tortillas with a sweet sauce and chuck the bowl over your shoulder so it smashes on the ground as you make a wish — then got distracted by the doggers.

In the distance a youthful brass band was massaging carols outside Santo Domingo. And the birthday *piñatas* were out for Jesus, so crowds gathered underneath these star-shaped decorations that were suspended above the street on a rope. A blindfolded volunteer has to whack the *piñata* with a stick until it smashes, then the goodies inside shower down and a screaming, laughing scrum forms. Our five-year-old refused to be battered and teased after the first scramble. The six-year-old hid her time and got handfuls of sweets from sympathetic teenagers.

We returned to our marvellous hotel, the Camina Real, a beautifully converted convent and undoubtedly the place to stay in Oaxaca if your budget can stand it. In the hall an orchestra played; in the main courtyard the guitars of a mariachi band drifted up and serenaded the children to sleep.

Breakfasts at the Camina Real are a treat. You soon get used to putting away a plate of pork enchiladas, or perhaps *chilaquiles rojos* (reconstituted tortillas with tomato, pepper and sour cream). Not to forget a *tamale de mole*, wrapped corn cakes smothered in a dark, chocolatey sauce. *Mole*, an Oaxacan speciality, is a fantastically complex, spicy creation with up to 72 ingredients, including chocolate. This is thousands of miles from the Americanised Mexican food served in Britain. Every morning Leonor would make tortillas on the griddle, while Plutarco cooked the eggs or bacon if you were feeling unadventurous.

Monte Alban, a few miles to the west, is the most impressive archaeological site, a plateau created by levelling the top of a hill as long ago as 500 BC and creating a sacred site. Oaxaca state is mostly mountainous, but here three valleys converge. A sacrificial victim in his final moments could look out from here and have a view to die for.

All the buildings sit directly facing or at right-angles to each other except one, presumed to be an observatory, stuck obstinately at 45 degrees. Under the blazing sun Mario, our guide, drew in the dust with a pointed stick and explained in diagrams how the angles, dates, equinoxes and solstices are perfectly built into the architecture.

A few yards away carvings of hunchbacks, breech births and hydrocephalic heads suggested an early medical school. There are some dark underground tombs — Number 104 is impressive with its frescoes and maize god over the entrance. A torch would have



A sophisticated carving at Monte Alban



Zapotec Indians in Oaxaca state prepare flowers for a colourful posadas, or procession, to celebrate Christmas

been handy. This is essentially a Zapotec site (discovering the layers of pre-Hispanic history and the differences between the 16 existing ethnic groups is one of the pleasures of visiting Oaxaca). It was at its peak between about AD 300 and 700, but deserted by the time the Spanish arrived in 1521.

Compare this with the remains of religious sites in Mitla, a few miles to the east, where the *conquistadores*, in a crude gesture of domination, made the native Indians build a church over their temple and forced them to worship the Christian God. Only later did archaeologists discover that the Indians had placed their own idols inside the walls.

Yugal is another splendid site, if your appetite for ruins is still sharp, with its large restored ball court. In this amazing sporting ritual, dating back at least 1,500 years, a game of five-a-side was played between two teams, the idea apparently being to keep the ball in the air using convenient hips, elbows, knees and shoulders. The stakes were high. Either the winning or the losing captain (depends who you talk to) was sacrificed.

Our guide offered the view that it must have been the winners who were sacrificed. He bases his theory on today's Mexican athletes who, in the Olympic Games in Atlanta, did not win any gold medals, presumably through fear of having their hearts cut out. A week was not enough in

### OAXACA FACT FILE

- The author travelled to Mexico City via Madrid on Iberia (0171-830 0011). Return flights from Heathrow via Madrid cost £407 plus tax until July 14, then £338. British Airways (0345 222111) flies to Mexico City for £439 plus tax until March 20, then £655.
- Internal flights from Mexico City to Oaxaca city cost £108 return. Oaxaca to Huatulco £39 return.
- Where to stay: Camina Real hotel, Calle 5 de Mayo 300, 68000 Oaxaca (double rooms from £98 plus 17 per cent tax). Hotel Hotel de La Noria, Ave Hidalgo 918. Attractive, good atmosphere, central location (double from US\$32 plus tax).
- Cox and Kings (0171-873 5000) has a Land of the Maya 15-day tour, including three days in Oaxaca, starting at £1,795. Journey Latin America (0181-747 8315) does escorted group trips (a 14-night trip, including Oaxaca, costs from £1,640 per person in a twin room) or individually tailored itineraries.
- Kuoni's (01306 742223) Mexico Panorama is an 11-day escorted tour, including two nights in Oaxaca, and an additional four nights in Cancun or Playa del Carmen, from £1,598.
- Where to eat: La Casa de la Abuela in the Oaxaca zocalo. Specialises in moles, red, yellow and black. El Patio, between Teotitlán and Mitla. New restaurant in courtyard. Excellent *cupanada* (chicken in yellow mole).
- Best museums in Oaxaca city: Museo Regional de Oaxaca next to Santo Domingo (brilliant Mixtec treasures). Museo Rufino Tamayo (pre-Hispanic artefacts).
- Tourist office in Oaxaca: (00 52 951) 4 28 37 Mexican Ministry of Tourism, 60-b1 Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DS (0171-734 1058).
- Essential: take a pocket Spanish dictionary.

Oaxaca. We had watched the local liquor, *mescal*, being made and drunk it with a salt and worm mixture; seen a *guelaguetza* (folk dance festival); bought rugs at Teotitlán (recommended); and taken in various fine museums. We were off to Huatulco, on the Oaxaca coast, for some sand and sea. The children were happy ("not another market"). We did not want to leave. But at least, thanks to the grasshoppers, we would be back.

TIMOTHY RICE

● The author was a guest of the Mexican Ministry of Tourism.

## WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 27

ASHRAM

(c) In India, a place of religious retreat, sanctuary, or hermitage. Hence *ashramite*, an occupant of an ashram. From the Sanskrit *āśrama*, a near to, towards + *śrama* exertion, earnest endeavour. "The traditional ashram is built of wattle and mud, and its roofs are of leaves."

DOSSY

(b) Stylish, smart. Hence *dossily*. Cf. the Scottish *doss* neat, spruce, dapper, smart, neat, a well-dressed person. "What with the ladies' bonnets and blouses' dossy hats."

GOMPA

(b) A Tibetan temple or monastery. From the Tibetan and Jäschke *gdon-pa*, a solitary place, a hermitage. "The monastery is named in Tibetan *Gön-pa*, vulgarly *Göm-pa*, or a solitary place or hermitage; and most monasteries are situated at least some distance off from villages."

BUCKEEN

(a) A female aboriginal Indian in Guiana. From the Guiana Dutch *bokin*, the female of *bok* a goat or buck. "They called her a *buckeen*; how much prettier than the word *squire*."

## High-rise horrors

Cancún is a holiday resort on the eastern fringes of Mexico's Yucatán peninsula. There, on a narrow skelt of land ribboning between turquoise seas and a soupy lagoon, vast hotels have descended like spaceships. At night, under the splintered stars of a tropical sky, they glimmer eerily, casting a sickly light over the dark waters. By day they hum with the hustle of the tourist trade. The palm-fringed villages of Yucatán's native culture have been erased. Mexican traditions have been ransacked and drained almost dry.

Downtown Cancún is like some time-trapped land where every night can be Saturday. It bristles with restaurants and nightclubs, discos and bars. You can dine on food from almost any part of the world from Portugal to Polynesia. But it is the stamp of the United States which is strongest. Mexican food, where you can find it, is good. Small cafés offer an economical *comida corrida* (set lunch) where spicy Yucatán dishes such as *pollo pibil* (chicken cooked in banana leaves) or succulent fresh seafood are served with side dishes of chile, avocado and tortillas.

Native Mayan culture has been reduced to a consumer commodity in Cancún. Its last tawdry remains linger amid the tourist tat of shopping malls: silver jewellery and woven blankets, carved wooden masks and painted pottery. However, a short drive away the ruined cities of a pre-Hispanic people can still be found, as unseemly in their own way as Cancún.

It is best to get to Chichén Itzá early in the morning. From about 10am, coachloads of other visitors begin to arrive. Overweight Texans haul themselves up the temple stairways like weight-winchers on some Mayan Stepmaster. One can imagine the ancient past when files of Maya priests in feather head-dresses would zigzag slowly to the pinnacles of sacred pyramids. Then, to the faithful who worshipped from afar, they would look like the great plumed serpent Quetzalcoatl. The only plumed serpent I saw was on the road back. A vast python had been crushed by a coach. Vultures were already devouring it.

RACHEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSTON

● The author was a guest of Sunser Holidays



Cancún: Mexican traditions have been ransacked

## Or try Huatulco

The guidebooks described Huatulco, the beach resort on the south coast of Oaxaca state, as "the new Cancún". Mexico may be the destination for 1997, but Huatulco is earmarked as its resort of the millennium. The setting is beautiful, as the Mexican government noticed when it decided that Huatulco was the latest big project: nine bays, ripe for development over the next two decades. But today the comparison with Cancún is way off the mark. The hotels (only a handful so far, all upmarket) are no higher than six storeys. The water is clean. There are only 1,832 rooms in the whole resort.

There has been no mad scramble to build. Access to Huatulco is difficult. There is an airport but the road down from Oaxaca is tortuous and takes seven hours. A large road is planned but may be years away. Also, foreign investment has not been as enthusiastic as was hoped. When you ask who is building the next hotel, the director of development smiles and shrugs.

Huatulco is not for people who are interested in Mexico. Apart from indifferent shopping in La Cruzcilla or Santa Cruz (both new towns), you are in international country and likely to have chosen it for the high-quality hotels, beaches and activities. There are no historic sites within close range.

We stayed at the comfortable Royal Maeva, a sort of glorified Club Med, where at Christmas 60 per cent of guests were Canadian. 20 per cent were American and most of the rest Mexican or Guatemalan. For all-inclusive rates you get room, food, drink and activities, including tennis, snorkelling, scuba diving, sailing and windsurfing. The food was pleasant but bland after the delights of proper Mexican cuisine in somewhere like Oaxaca city. The staff were superb. The sun blazed down.

The children, from infants to teenagers, adored it. The adults enjoyed themselves too, but would have preferred somewhere more Mexican and less purpose-built. West along the coast is Puerto Escondido, a complete contrast — more Mexican, more interesting. The Santa Fe hotel is the place to stay, overlooking Zicatela Beach. Along the coast at Mazunte is a successful turtle research and conservation centre (turtles lay thousands of eggs along this coast) and Maniátepec lagoon is a peaceful getaway.

TIMOTHY RICE

● Royal Maeva, PO Box 277, Bahías de Huatulco, Oaxaca 70989, Mexico. Until April 6, a double room costs US\$120 per person per day, all-inclusive. Variable according to season.

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مكتبة من رصاص

Jane Reed finds that life is never too short to stuff a mushroom during a cookery course in southern Italy

# Lessons from pasta masters

So you want all that way just to buy this Italian cookbook? said the nephew, flicking through it dismissively. It was Sunday. As usual I was cooking lunch at home for him, the niece, the wives, boyfriends, their friends and as many of the family who were up.

I opened the oven door and a gust of steam filled the kitchen. "Well? What is it then?" said one, sniffing the air. "Agnello e patate al forno." There was a pause. "That's just roast lamb and potatoes," said the one who did a GCSE in menu Italian. "Yes," I said.

Well, it was. But I hoped they would notice the difference. This was a Puglian-style roast lamb and potatoes, a dish of the region of Puglia which I had just visited on a week's cookery course at great expense with one of the nieces and an old friend.

I had to admit that what was on the serving plate didn't look exactly cordon bleu. Puglian food is rustic, no doubt about it. No towers of mousselines, elegant jus or coulis. This was just cubes of lean lamb that fell apart at the touch of a fork, with chunks of waxy, roasted potatoes, little roasted tomatoes, bread crumbs, grated pecorino, finely chopped fresh oregano, rosemary and flat-leaf parsley, the obligatory drizzle of olive oil, some white wine and water, in the oven for a little over an hour. "Now that's what I call local culture," sighed the niece's partner, who as of this minute will inherit my entire fortune. "You can keep all the museums, galleries and churches. This is what you go abroad for."

I suppose the success of a cookery-course holiday has to be judged by the quality of the subsequent eating. If so, this holiday was a triumph. With



## FACT FILE

Italian Cookery Weeks, PO Box 2482, London NW10 1HW (0171-401 8763/0181-208 0112). Courses are held in Umbria between May 11 and July 29 and in Puglia between Aug 24 and Oct 2. There are 16-20 places available each week and group and single bookings are welcome. The cost is £1,055pp, including return flights from London, seven nights' accommodation, food and wine, a one-day excursion, airport transfers in Italy for 1992 excluding flights.

praise like that — and more for the *pesce ripieno*, made by the niece who travelled with me — you tend to forgive things like no hot water, not enough hands-on cooking or explanation about the region. And yes, I would have liked to know more about Puglia in the heel of Italy and its contents because it was different. Olive groves from the distant hills to the water's edge, stone walls, small fields, more olives. It's not as developed as it would be farther north. The Puglian mentality centres on *domani* — they

prefer *siestas* to building Sheratons. (Or mending the shower in my bathroom, come to that.)

Ostuni, the nearest small town to our course, was the typical old and new town mix: half Moorish fortification, half Harlow New Town. It was September, the temperature in the 70s, and technically out of season. We tried to blend unobtrusively into a warm, wet Wednesday afternoon to watch the town wake from its siesta around 4.30; we jumped out of the way of the armada of boy students on Lambrettas racing out of school, the beautiful young girls giggling as they go by; we downed an espresso with a slice of *torta di ricotta* at the corner coffee bar. Living the life. Or pretending to. I have often wondered if Italian holidaymakers hang out in Truro or Slough trying nonchalantly to look British.

On Saturday morning you mill around in the impressive market in Ostuni among the wonderful food stalls, trays of fresh, white ricotta, yellow-gold wheels of local cheese they encourage you to taste before buying; two tubs of different olives, of capers in salt or wine vinegar, long red chillies, big yellow-green peppers, tomatoes — still dusty from the vine. We bought far more than we could consume or give away.

And who were we? What sort of people go on cookery courses in southern Italy? The niece had money on the fact that she would be the youngest on the course by 20 years — and she lost.

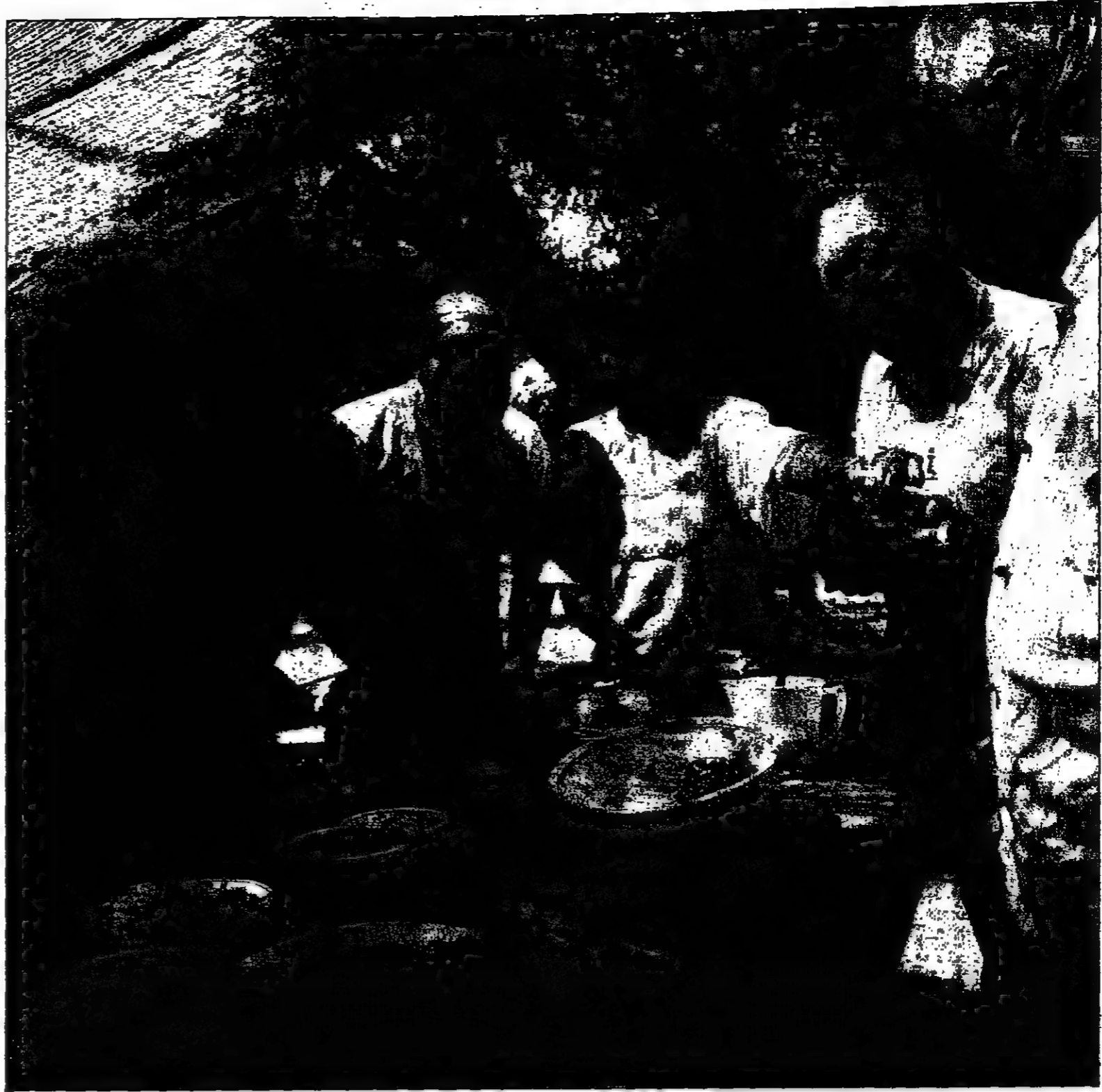
And the friend and I expected it would be all women — and it wasn't. There was Betty and her daughters, of course. Betty, 70, is very pretty, tall and slim with thick white, bobbed hair, and this was her third time in Puglia.

The young Scottish couple were accountant and systems analyst respectively. They tried to look the room beautifully photographed in the brochure for the course at La Spagnola, but discovered it was used exclusively by Susanna Gelmetti, the course's inspiration and executive cook. They were disappointed and would have taken off after a few days had we not all got on so well.

There were two rather similar, attractive couples from the home counties. They knew a lot about cooking and eating out. They had productive gardens and went on mushroom- and truffle-hunting weeks. One of the husbands broke out of the mould and joined the "boys behaving badly" group, about which I

more later. Then there were the Swedish ladies from Wimbledon and Malmo, and the retired headmistress, Elizabeth, who we all called Myrtle (don't ask).

Eighteen of us in all, with some common threads. We were all interested in food, liked cooking, and clearly knew rather a lot about it: liked eating out and could



Recipe for success: cookery enthusiasts listen attentively as a guest chef shows them the tricks of the trade, using ingredients they bought themselves



Lecce's many charms include a splendid roccoco cathedral

swap restaurants and recipes. So watching Susanna press *pate suore* into cake tins for half an hour on the first evening left us all a little flat. But with that unquenchable British spirit, we made light of it in a mustn't-grumble sort of way.

We made light of the many small irritations of any holiday; we laughed a lot, did the conge round the pizza oven,

played practical jokes, got merry on orange-coloured Campari cocktails. We diligently rolled wafer-thin slices of grilled courgette around little chunks of salty local cheese and stuffed endless arrays of fruit and vegetables. The Puglian way of life is not too short to stuff a mushroom you see, or a courgette, or an aubergine, or a tomato...

But it was the sexy way Tonino (the local chef and restaurant owner who worked alongside Susanna) in one fluid movement smashed the garlic with the flat of his knife, then chopped it, the tip of the knife never leaving the chopping board, that made us breathe a little faster; and the tips for "teeps" as they became known that we picked up from Tonino, Susanna and the other guests.

Susanna is a rather dramatic 34-year-old Italian of, I think, grand parentage but who seems to have spent much of her childhood in the kitchen.

en. A journalist, she found backing in London for a scheme that would blend her passion for cooking with a yearning to explain to the world the many blessings of the Italian lifestyle. Six years ago after she opened her first cookery school in Umbria, she opened another in Puglia. This one is a very different kind of school — more rustic, very informal, more a holiday than a cookery course. You are invited to purchase Susanna's excellent book and a very reasonable five-litre can of olive oil at the end of the week.

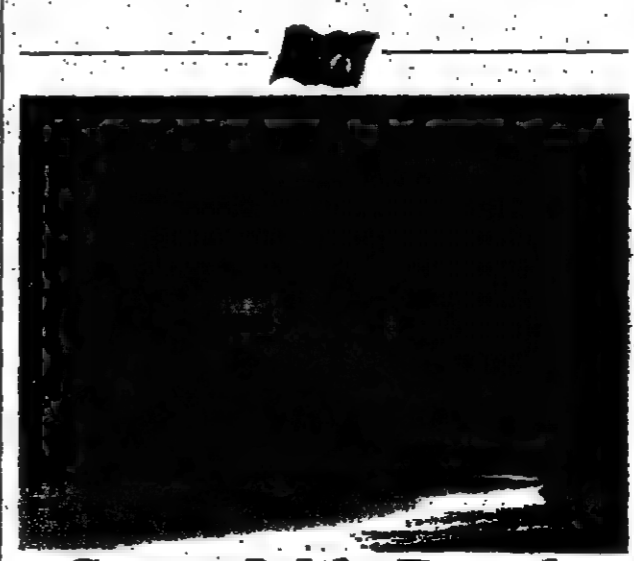
Our day went like this: after breakfast we watched Susanna and Tonino cook lunch, with occasional help from us. After lunch we slept; then we bundled into mini-vans to visit places of local interest, and finally returned to watch Tonino cook our supper.

The best trip was a day out in the old city of Lecce, to see the renowned food market, the roccoco cathedral and to picnic in a city park. The local dog-walkers are used to seeing these crazy English people every Wednesday laying out a table with *frittata*, rice salad, wine, crusty bread, and grapes bought in the market. I think we sang in the coach going home. The Swedes have a bouncy and peculiar road song about sitting in the back of cars and hoping not to crash.

"Home" was a 15th-century castle, La Spagnola, crumbling and beautiful and highly recommended in a book on bed and breakfast in Italy, its chapels and storerooms now converted into ensuite rather minimalist bedrooms (with rather minimalist plumbing). You remember the castle in the last scene of the last *Godfather* film where he falls off his chair, dead? Well, La Spagnola was a bit like that, very filmic.

You want to know about the boys behaving badly? Well, the first night Simon, Mark, Neil and Chris played bar football until dawn and drank anything they could find in the terrace bar — a heady combination of Coke, Campari, beer, wine, peach nectar, strange brandies — with a few hangers-on and chef Tonino. At San Tonino, by all accounts, suddenly got up, donned his

chef's whites, laid a perfect table and made them all spaghetti in truffle oil with chillis. Just like that. They came into class the next day clutching beads, herb teas, jugs of water and blue chins. And then did it again the next night. Their women were, of course, very tolerant, smiling sweetly between gritted teeth as they jabbed their rolled courgettes with cocktail sticks.



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WEEKEND • SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22 1997

Switzerland: Shaken but not stirred, the skiing village of Grindelwald once played host to James Bond

# One more gluhwein before I hit the slopes



For a weekend skiing with a touch of class you cannot beat the Swiss mountain village resort of Grindelwald. Tucked between the feet of the Eiger, Jungfrau and Wetterhorn mountains, Grindelwald and the surrounding area have more than 270km of ski runs. These include the slopes of the Jungfrau, Mount First, Männlichen and, 30 minutes' drive away, the mighty Schilthorn. It also offers skiers of all levels plenty to choose from — not to mention stunning views, fine hotels and enjoyable après-ski.

Last year saw the start of the Swiss airline Air Engadina's flights from London's City Airport to Bern. This allows you to depart from Docklands in London at 8.05am and arrive in Bern in under two hours. Another hour's drive to the hotel in Grindelwald, and you can be on the slopes by just after 1pm.

The resort has a selection of places to stay but if you want to spoil yourself the five-star Grand Hotel Regina is a must. Situated across the street from the Jungfrau railway station, the starting point for many spectacular excursions through the region, the hotel enjoys a central position in the village. It also has a colourful history (former guests include the Beatles, Margaret Thatcher and a "canaveral" of NASA astronauts) and a splendid restaurant — I recommend the bouillabaisse.

The people of Grindelwald pride themselves on the region's outstanding natural beauty and a key to this clean, pollution-free environment is the Jungfrau railway, a cog railway that runs the 12km (straight through the Eiger and Mönch mountains) to the Jungfraujoch, Europe's highest railway station at about 11,333ft above sea level. Here you will find the Sphinx meteorological station, ice Palace and restaurant as well as views across the awesome Aletsch glacier. The glacier looks pristine and deceptively inviting but temperatures can drop to -20C.

Two stops below the Jungfrau summit, 40 minutes above Grindelwald, is Kleine Scheidegg, the centre for all ski activity on the Jungfrau. Based at the foot of the notorious Eiger, Kleine Scheidegg is the hub for more than 98km of ski runs and a colourful environment for many a gluhwein bar. This is vital to warm the cockles and to supply that essential courage only the Dutch know so well.

A 30-minute drive from Grindelwald and then 30 minutes again in a four-stop cable-car and you arrive at the Schilthorn summit. At 9,900ft above sea level is the restaurant made famous for its role



Kleine Scheidegg, high above Grindelwald, is based at the foot of the Eiger and is the centre for more than 98km of ski runs; it also accommodates many a cosy gluhwein bar



Views from the Eiger

In the James Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. Taking lunch in the solar-powered, revolving restaurant, which moves through 360 degrees in one hour, affords majestic views over Mount Blanc, the Bernese Alps and the Black Forest on Germany's central plain. Naturally, I chose a vodka martini for my aperitif.

Shaken but not stirred, intrepid skiers can set forth on an excellent black run through a testing field of moguls that starts just outside the restaurant. After a mile or so, the moguls disappear and merge into the gentler slopes of Birg, the next cable-car stop down from the Schilthorn, which provides calmer skiing.

The slopes on the Schilthorn, all 50km of them, open at 9.30am but beginner and intermediate skiers will find the skiing here a little more challenging than on the Jungfrau. The only drawback to the Schilthorn is the T-bar lift at the bottom of the Engel run

beneath Birg. It is more demanding than the ski down and calls for better technique. As on the Jungfrau, ski-lifts close at 4.30pm.

The après-ski in Grindelwald includes the usual collection of shops, bars, restaurants and clubs. The Old Spotted Cat club (turn right out of the Grand Hotel Regina and walk 500 yards up the main street) opens early and closes late, providing skiers with the chance to dance away any remaining energy until the small hours.

One activity that must be attempted is the Bussalp sledge-run every Sunday evening. The organisers provide the sledges and coaches leave from Grindelwald's central square, next to the ice sculptures, between 7.30pm and 9pm. After a traditional and simply fortified fondue, the hardy travellers straddle their mounts and sledge the four miles back to Grindelwald.

It takes a good 45 minutes to get down, leaving plenty of time to absorb the views of drifting Alpine snow, cloud-busting spruces and village lights twinkling in the valley below. Or you can simply fall off your sledge every 100 yards in fits of uncontrollable laughter. But do take care that you do not collide with any velogemels. These are wooden bicycle-like devices that have ski-runners in place of wheels. They are a Swiss method of winter transport, unique to the area. Like a long-weekend's skiing in Grindelwald, they are great fun but gone in the twinkling of an eye.

PERRY CLEVELAND-PECK



Grindelwald: glorious

## FACT FILE

■ The author was a guest of The Leading Hotels of the World. For reservations call 0800 181 123 (toll free). At the Grand Hotel Regina (0041 36 54 54 55) prices start from £197 per night for a double room without breakfast. An "Alpine Adventure" stay (minimum of two nights) costs £233 per night for a double room including breakfast, one evening meal and an excursion to Mount First.

■ Air Engadina (0345 666777) flights from City Airport to Bern cost £189 weekday return, £209 at weekends.

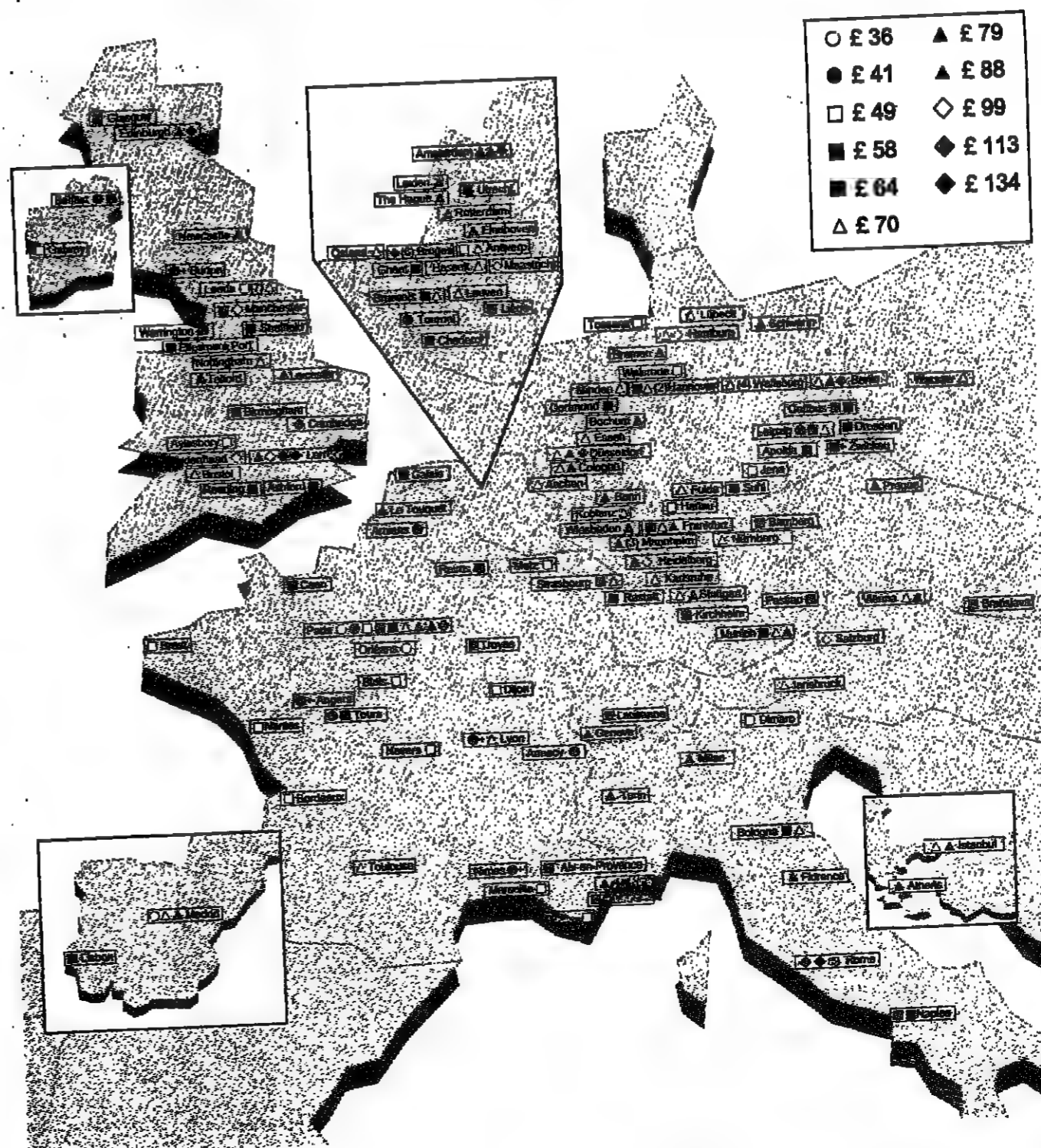
■ Ski passes for five days cost £102. Ski hire, arranged by the hotel, from £68 for five days.

■ Grindelwald Tourist Office (0041 36 54 12 12).

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Britain: Weekend breaks to Robin Hood country and the city of Charles Rennie Mackintosh

# Merry men in tights

For one who has not drawn a breath, never mind a longbow, in 700 years, Robin Hood has a bigger following now than when there was just himself, his merry men and Maid Marian.

In our hero's day, Sherwood Forest would have been on the doorstep of our central Nottingham hotel. But the centuries have taken their toll on the greenwood, and one of the best places to see it now is at the visitor centre near the village of Edwinstowe, about ten miles north of the city.

Sherwood, the legendary home of Robin Hood, was once one of England's great royal hunting grounds and the visitor centre is in the last remaining part of the old forest. An exhibition, *The Legend of Robin Hood and Merry Sherwood*, sets the scene and a nature centre shows why the forest is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

A small charge for the exhibition includes prize draw questionnaires to amuse the children on the 20-minute waymarked trail to the Major Oak, a majestic medieval specimen reputed to be Robin's favourite hiding place. It is now propped up to support its overhanging branches and fenced off to protect its roots from visitors' feet.

The centre has an open-air woodland theatre with an ever-changing programme. On the day we visited, Bill Brookman, a man in tights, was presenting *Robin Hood Meets the Cosmos*, a frenetic interpretation of the outlaw tale placing the legend in the context of life, the universe and just about everything. The children loved him. The grown-ups eventually loved him, too, once they cast off their inhibitions and threw themselves into their impromptu starring roles.

At St Mary's church in Edwinstowe, Robin is said to have wed Marian. A few miles to the south, in the hillside cemetery of Blythwood parish church, is the grave of Will Scarlett, while at Papplewick church stands the ancient yew from which Robin cut his first bow and Allen-a-Dale got his true love.

The city of Nottingham itself has much to offer the visitor — much more, in fact, than can be crammed into the longest of long weekends. As many of the attractions are within a few minutes' walk of the city centre, it is advisable, especially for families with young children, to select a central location.

We found the Royal Mont House ideally situated and comfortable, with four restaurants. Nottingham City Council's explorer pass allows



Major Oak, a majestic medieval tree that was reputed to be Robin Hood's favourite hiding place

discounted admission to five of the city's most popular attractions. Staying with the outlaw trail, we visited The Tales of Robin Hood on Maid Marian Way. Here, high-tech transporter cars take one back 700 years to relive the legend in sight, sound and smell.

Afterwards, you can try your hand at archery as you "shoot the sheriff", or watch a short film that tries to unravel Robin's real identity.

Just around the corner, at the top of Friar Lane, stand the medieval gates to Nottingham Castle, which is not really a castle at all but a fine 17th-century ducal mansion built

on the site of the original Norman fortress and commanding spectacular views. The building now houses one of the finest museums and art galleries in the East Midlands. Tours are recommended of Mortimer's Hole, a steep cave through the sandstone rock beneath the museum.

The entrance to the most fascinating glimpse of the city's past is to be found in the modern bustle of the Broad Marsh shopping centre, whose bright lights give way to the cool gloom of the Caves of Nottingham beneath its foundations. This warren of man-made caves, last used as a wartime air-raid

shelter, were saved by local voluntary groups when the shopping centre was built. The caves were widely used as pub cellars, the constant temperature (14C) being ideal for storing barrels of beer. The pillar caves are the most impressive, dating from 1250 and containing the remains of Britain's only underground tannery.

Nearby, in a restored chapel in the historic Lace Market area, is the Lace Hall. Audiovisual presentations and demonstrations of lace-making on a 100-year-old working machine bring to life the story of lace and Nottingham's role in the textile revolution.

In the neighbouring former 19th-century courthouse and county gaol is "Condemned! ... at the Gallies of Justice", a grim fog 'em and hang 'em tour likely to satisfy the most ardent devotee of crime and punishment, from a re-enactment of a true 19th-century show trial down to the sandstone cave cells known as "the pits".

It was the grown-ups who shuddered the most at the menacing jailer, not the children, who thoroughly enjoyed clambering up the steps to the gallows in the claustrophobic exercise yard. Lying under the flagstones were those who, in this yard, had seen their last glimpse of the sky. And Robin Hood thought he had a hard time with the Sheriff of Nottingham.

PATRICK HANLON



Keen young followers of Robin Hood and his group of outlaws seek inspiration from his statue

## NOTTINGHAM FACT FILE

■ The author was a guest of the Nottingham Royal Mont House, Wollaton Street, Nottingham NG1 5RH (0159 349988). Double en suite room from £120 per night; breakfast £9.95 per person. Weekend rate (two nights B&B to include Saturday): £47 per person; "Robin Hood" offer: subject to availability: £29.50 per person B&B.

■ How to get there: British Rail Inquiries for Nottinghamshire: 0345 449450; East Midlands International Airport (01332 85252) is 14 miles away.

■ Other places of interest: Newstead Abbey, Newstead Abbey Park (01623 79357). Ancestral home of Lord Byron, containing his possessions, manuscripts and first editions in period rooms. 200 acres of parkland. The World of Robin Hood, Haughon, near Retford. Relive medieval history in sound and vision, medieval village, film sets from Robin Hood — Prince of Thieves. D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum, Eastwood (01773 763312). Furnished appropriately to the time of the Lawrence family's occupation; adjacent craft centre.

■ City of Nottingham: Tourism Section, Nottingham City Council, Castle Gate House, 24-30 Castle Gate, Nottingham NG1 7AT (0159 483500)

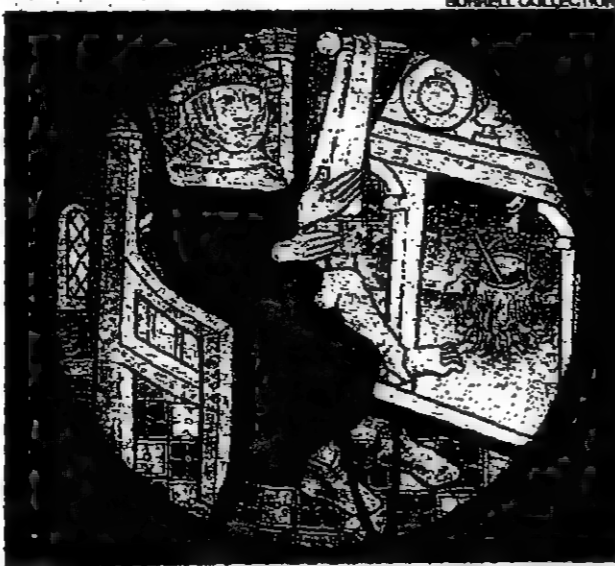
## Zen and the art of Glasgow

Ten years ago Glasgow was all Gorbals and tenements in most people's minds, but since its stint as European City of Culture it has come to represent museums, music, galleries, good food and the style of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. "First time in Glasgow?" our first cabbie asked, as he took us from station to hotel. "You'll like it."

The next cabbie, who took us to the Ubiquitous Chip, one of 11 Glasgow restaurants in the *Good Food Guide*, was just as proud of his city. "Don't those buildings look magnificent, all cleaned up and flooded? That's the University on your left, or I should say Glasgow University because we've got three ... that's Kelvingrove Park, which has got two art galleries ..."

I got happily lost in the Ubiquitous Chip's wine list, which includes three single-spaced pages of single-malt whiskies and what seemed like 1,000 wines. My Aberdeen Angus steak was sublime, and my partner's monkfish was huge. Cuisine and culture were obviously going to be the themes of this weekend's visit, but with almost 40 entries in the *Glasgow Galleries Guide*, two days would give us no more than a toe-dip.

The Burrell Collection was donated to the city by the shipowner Sir William Burrell (1861-1958), who began buying in his teens and was still at it when he was 96. He accumulated 8,000 objects, most of which are now on show in a stunning purpose-built building in Pollok Park in the southwest of the city. There are Persian carpets, Rodin sculp-



A stained-glass window from the Burrell collection

tures including *The Thinker*, prints by Rembrandt, paintings by Cézanne, Degas, Manet and Millet, some fine Egyptian heads and reliefs, and a display of stained glass that goes back to the 12th century. And, as with all Glasgow's museums, admission is free, as are guided tours. Other cities take note.

More free culture but not a free lunch at the Willow Tea Rooms designed by Mackintosh, above Henderson's the Jewellers. In Sauchiehall Street, mirrored walls make the small room look larger, but Mackintosh's high-backed silver chairs also make it look crowded. And it is for much of the time, so be prepared to queue on the stairs while you await your tea and fancies.

The St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art opened in 1993 with claims to be the

only religious museum in the world. It looks at the way all faiths affect both art and daily life, from Salvador Dali to the Dalai Lama. Named after the city's patron saint, it stands in front of the cathedral and opposite the oldest house in Glasgow, the 1471 Provand's Lordship, also open to visitors.

Some of the work has been specially commissioned, such as a delightful statue of the Hindu elephant god Ganesha, made in Bangalore. The multi-denominational nature is not to everyone's taste, as a glance at the comments people are invited to leave indicates. One asks that Ganesha be moved away from the influence of nearby Christian exhibits, to which someone else scribbles: "But that's the whole point!" A visitor from Athens asks

where is the Orthodox faith, though most comments are of the "profound experience" variety. I found it just that.

Step through to the gallery devoted to religious life, and you are confronted by a horrific dancing skeleton, made for the Mexican Day of the dead. This gallery deals with the way different religions deal with our journey through life, from birth via courtship and marriage to death and the after-life. Stunning black and white photographs confront us with images of religious warfare, of Northern Ireland and the Holocaust.

Upstairs is a gallery devoted to religion in Scotland, and a large window looks down on Britain's only Japanese Zen garden. This blissfully peaceful scene has rippling patterns of stone which lead the eye to Glasgow Cathedral, largely built in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Alongside is the city's Necropolis, a hillside tumble of tombs and crosses. I should have explored more but the rain was drizzling and my cultural coffers were full for the day. It was time to get back to Scottish cuisine and a supper of salmon mousse and venison steaks at One Devonshire Gardens, yet another of Glasgow's culinary shrines.

But the last word goes to the cabbie who dropped us at the station: "People expect Glasgow to be a rough old place but I've yet to meet a visitor who hasn't been pleasantly surprised by what we've got to offer."

MIKE GERRARD  
● The author was a guest of the Glasgow Tourist Board.

## GLASGOW FACT FILE

■ Where to stay: Malmesoun, 278 West George Street (0141-221 6400). Small and stylish. Double room £80 per night; suite £110. One Devonshire Gardens (0141-339 2001). Small and deluxe. Double room costs £165 midweek, £125 at weekends.

■ Where to eat: The Ubiquitous Chip, 12 Ashton Lane (0141-334 5007). Open daily. The Willow Rooms, 217 Sauchiehall Street (0141-332 0521).

■ What to visit: The Burrell Collection, 2060 Pollokshaws Road (0141-649 7151).

Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 11am-5pm. The St Mungo Museum, 2 Castle Street (0141-553 2557). Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 11am-5pm.

Hummerston Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, 82 Hillhead Street (0141-330 5430). Open Mon-Sat 9.30am-5pm. Includes a reconstruction of Mackintosh's former home at 78 Southpark Avenue (closed at lunchtime). Also fine Whistler collection.

■ Glasgow Tourist Information Centre, 39 St Vincent Place, Glasgow G1 2ER (0141-204 4480).

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How to get ahead on bikes, and the new Triumphs

Pages 3, 10



The hunt is on for our top company driver

Page 5



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22 1997

Many drivers risk lives by failing to secure their pets, warns Simon Hacker in the run-up to Cruft's

## Deadly danger of unrestrained dogs



Cages and harnesses are recommended by experts

As 20,000 dogs and their loving owners prepare to converge on Cruft's 1997 next month, some bad news: no matter how affectionate and even-tempered your canine friend, as a car passenger it can maul or kill both itself and you.

It's not Fido's fault. But an unsecured dog in the back of a car becomes an extreme danger in the event of an accident.

Colliding with a solid object when driving at the urban speed limit creates the same force of deceleration used to test safety belts in a crash simulator. But while the seatbelted driver may be abruptly restrained in a crash, an unsecured 50lb dog sitting

in the back of the car will continue flying forwards. Multiply the hapless dog's body weight by what accident researchers term a "pulse" of 20G, and a three-and-a-half-stone adult Springer Spaniel is transformed into an unguided missile

propelled by a wallowing 1,000ft/lbs of kinetic energy.

Although the vast majority of Cruft's Show contenders will be nursed to Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre in the relative safety of harnesses, padded boxes and cages, the parcel-shelf poodle and lap-top Labrador are still common features of driving life. Two years into her job, trainee veterinary nurse Jess

White from Gloucestershire has already seen her fair share of road-related pet injuries, but a crash in which her own whippet, Dudley, died has made her an avid spokeswoman for dog safety.

"I was driving in my Mini at about 60mph when another vehicle pulled out on me," she recalls. "Dudley, who was 12, was sitting on the back seat when we crashed. I suffered head injuries; he broke his neck. But he didn't die immediately and was in terrible pain. I wouldn't let the ambulance take him away until the vet had

arrived. I learnt my lesson the hard way; you should always choose a car with rear belts and fit a proper dog harness to the belt."

Mike Dickson, group leader for body engineering and safety at the Motor Industry Research Association's laboratories, says a hatchback or estate car with fold-down rear seats can be less likely to stop loose objects flying about in an impact, because the seats buckle under pressure. But the good news is that the introduction of centre three-point belts in place of lap belts has resulted in greater strength.

"The seats have been reinforced for the fifth belt and are less likely to collapse under the same strain. So if your dog is behind the seat, it will stand a better chance," says Dickson.

The magazine *Dogs Today*, is campaigning to make dog safety a bigger issue among carmakers.

"Manufacturers might be good at designing cup holders but they tend to develop a blind spot for four-legged passengers," explains editor Beverley Cuddy. "Volvo is making extraordinary efforts. For the 850 saloon, there's a cage area which allows you to fold a seat down and keep your dog in the boot, but the dog can still see you, so everyone's happy. Apart from Volvo though, no one else seems to be bothered."

Given that a quarter of UK households have dogs, carmakers need to wake up, says Cuddy. "They're quick to use dogs to beautify their brochures, but that's about as far as it goes. We tell our readers to take their dogs with them when they go for a test drive."

The RSPCA recommends harnesses, particularly for small dogs. Spokeswoman Justine Pannett says, "It's important that the restraint is fitted to the dog's body and not a collar. For bigger dogs, we recommend a guard to stop the animal from falling forwards."



Without a modern, strongly mounted harness, a dog like Vesper would become an unguided missile in a collision

The RAC, however, has doubts about conventional dog guards. Safety spokesman Kevin Delaney feels a guard might actually increase injury risks. "A guard might prevent Fido from hopping into the front, but it's pretty useless for restraining a big dog in a crash. If it comes free, you have the added problem of the guard, as well as your dog, heading your way. The last thing you want immediately after a collision is for both dog and guard to rearrange themselves around the back of your head."

But that doesn't mean don't restrain your dog. "It's utter madness to let small dogs stand or sit on the parcel shelf," Delaney says. "When you brake sharply, the dog is likely to end up embedded under the front seat. In a head-on — and if it doesn't take out half of your skull on the way — it will hit the windscreen. And any dog left to wander loose in the back of any car is lethal baggage."

Be it to a show or just for walks, if you're planning to take your dog on a journey, the RAC advises that you ensure that your dog is confined to an area big enough to enable it to lie down, but small enough to prevent it from roaming about. If possible, place padded material between the seat-back and the dog, so that if the dog moves forwards suddenly in an accident or when braking hard, any impact is cushioned.

The Department of Transport says it has not researched restraints for dogs, but points to the Highway Code for guidance. "Section 213 of the code stresses the need to keep animals under control and to make sure they are not a distraction to the driver, so an unrestrained dog could be judged by police as driving without due care and attention," says a spokesman. Car insurers have no guidelines or stipulations for dog owners, and pet insurers such



Bentley's Cocker Spaniels are happy to ride in cages

### How to quell a Boxer rebellion

TRISHA BENTLEY, whose Cocker Spaniel, Albert, was overall winner at Cruft's in 1996, believes different dogs require different restraints. Albert and her nine other Cocker Spaniels are happy to ride in wire cages in the back of her Ford Escort. But Vesper, a prize Boxer bitch, just won't entertain being stashed at the back of the car.

Says Trisha: "Vesper panics and she has to be closer to me, so she sits on the back seat and wears a restraining Hi-Craft harness which attaches to the safety belt."

"It is important that dog owners think before they set out on a journey and that they keep the wellbeing of their dogs in mind. A dog is a member of the family."



Harness-supporter Jess White lost Dudley, above, in a crash

as Hill House Hammond do not insist upon cages or harnesses being fitted. Some pet-product specialists, however, suggest more dogs are killed in the panic following a crash than during the crash itself. Geoff Caldwell, managing director of Barjo Kennel Systems, believes an unrestrained dog will jump through a broken window and often into the path of other traffic. Barjo designs

wire mesh cages which are custom made to fit most models of estate car. A standard cage sells for £135.

"The key is to protect your dog from injury, protect you from your dog and protect anyone attempting to rescue you from a distressed and potentially dangerous animal," says Caldwell.

Cruft's Show starts on March 6 at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham.

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Taxing road-use is a money-raising stunt that won't make more motorists travel to the office by rail — drivers will just avoid the motorways instead

# Road tolls are a ding-dong idea

My part of the country is now regarded as being in the M4 corridor, a term lovingly used by estate agents to convince people that an area is within daily commuting distance of London. And indeed there are plenty of people in my area who do commute to London every day; you can identify them by the bags under their eyes.

An off-peak standard-class return ticket from Chippenham, my nearest main-line station, to Paddington now costs £31.50. The same return journey by car is about 200 miles and in an average car will use, at most, six gallons of fuel. In Chippenham, unleaded petrol costs about £2.80 a gallon, therefore the fuel cost of the journey is £17.16.

The last time the Government

## DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



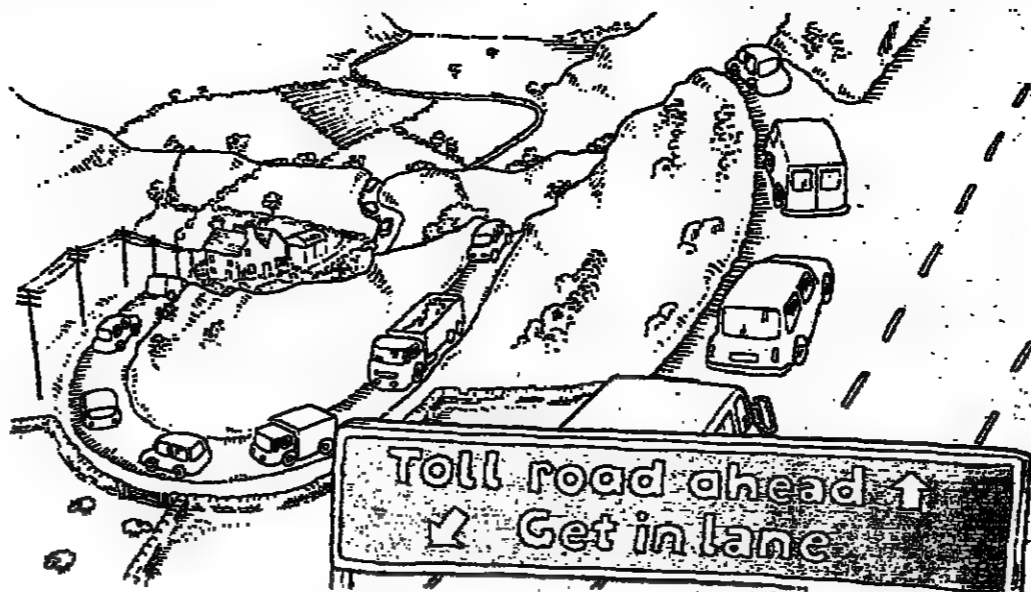
Peter Barnard

costed road pricing, it reckoned that cars would pay 1.5p per mile for motorway journeys. Thus the aforementioned round-trip would set us back £3 in tolls at the very most. Add that to the fuel cost and we have a grand total of £20.16. So, even using the cheapest return rail

fare as a comparison, the journey is more than £11 cheaper by road than it is by rail.

This week *The Times* reported that the Government is pressing ahead with trials of a "ray-gun" device to collect road tolls. The nominal purpose of tolls is to make motorists pay for the cost of road improvements, even though we already pay the Treasury far more than we get back in road spending. But the secondary purpose of tolls is to make motorway more expensive and thus force us to use the railways.

Before you rush for the word processor or the writing paper, I know that motorists are living in dreamland if they think the only cost of travelling by car is the fuel. Surveys have shown that the real, overall cost of motoring is quite high but there is a central fallacy in



those figures: they imply that if we went to work by rail, we would not own a car at all.

Of course we would. It would do less mileage if we travelled by rail to work, suggesting a higher residual value and fewer repairs, but then we would be likely to keep the car longer. So by the time we came to trade it in, the car would

be worth no more than if we were swapping a newer one with the same mileage.

Railway advocates also suffer convenient amnesia about the fact that just as car journeys cost more than the petrol, rail journeys cost more than the ticket. Before the railways were privatised, taxpayers were subsidising them to the

tune of £1 billion a year. Now, the subsidy has doubled to £2 billion a year. We are paying twice as much not to own the railways as we paid to own them, though the subsidy is supposed to reduce and eventually disappear over the next decade.

So will road pricing get drivers off the motorways? Oh yes, definitely. The trouble is that road

pricing will not get drivers off the motorways and on to the trains, but off the motorways and on to the minor roads. If you doubt that, consider the fact that every time the toll on the older of the Severn bridges is raised, more transport firms tell their drivers to take the route through Gloucestershire that avoids the bridge.

Transport firms have already warned that road pricing (the toll would be much higher for lorries than cars) will increase the cost of goods, therefore another hidden cost is revealed: even people who do not use cars would end up paying for roads via the increased price of groceries.

No wonder that in last week's *Autoglass/CAR 97* poll, only 16 per cent thought road tolls were the answer to congestion. The majority are no doubt also worried that once tolls arrive, their cost would inexorably rise. That would not make rail more competitive, because rail fares also rise.

Road tolls are taxation by another name, a money-raising stunt with no impact on congestion or pollution. Tolls are a wheeze for the Treasury and the people who make the technology. For ordinary motorists they are simply a cost without a benefit.

## Greening our traffic

# Magic mix could clean up diesel

Water, plus a secret agent, might be the answer, says Stuart Birch

Tests that could revolutionise the diesel car industry are underway in a laboratory at the high-security Millbrook automotive development centre and proving ground. A new fuel which should be no more expensive than ordinary diesel could make smoky exhausts a thing of the past.

And the wonder ingredient that makes it all possible is water — working with a secret agent. Concern about possible health risks from diesel smoke and particulates — soot — blown from exhaust pipes has grown recently. But now a French-Chilean inventor, Charles Mirel, has set up a British-registered company to develop and market an emulsifying agent, codenamed HEM 100, which may bring ultra-clean emissions.

Mirel is trying to prove wrong the old saying that oil and water do not mix. The work at Millbrook will be completed in late March and if the figures add up, diesel fuel could gain a green halo.

News of the potential breakthrough is revealed in this month's special magazine, *Diesel Car & Jet*. "If Mirel's claims are proved accurate it will mean that he has come up with a cheap, organic, easily manufactured agent that performs the difficult trick of creating a permanent bond between diesel fuel and water. This could be the key to a new world of cleaner, more efficient car engines," says editor John Kerswill.

"It sounds almost too good to be true and only tests and time will prove whether it is. But it looks very hopeful at present."

Mirel's work could lead to a major battle between diesel and petrol power and may reverse the recent shrinking market for diesel cars in the UK — down from a peak of 23 per cent to 18 per cent.

Kerswill says the new fuel has been researched and developed by Mirel over the past 15 years, and is a "simple" modification of normal car diesel fuel. It could be used in any car diesel engine, be it old or new.

Henry Coelho, a retail design consultant is a director of Mirel's Eurofuel company. "Using water in diesel fuel is not new. Ship engines use it and some large truck engines have water injection. But the problem has been developing a fuel suitable for small engines and one which will cope with temperature changes. Early tests have seen temperatures as low as minus 17C and up to plus 45C without showing signs of deterioration," says Coelho.

He says it cuts particulates by at least 80 per cent, and oxides of nitrogen, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide are all reduced by at least 30-40 per cent. These are very significant claims as governments bring in ever-tighter emissions legislation which pose major, and very expensive, problems for diesel car-engine makers.

The secret process involves diesel fuel and water being emulsified by the HEM 100 agent, which bonds water and hydrocarbon molecules to produce a milky looking liquid. The water lowers combustion temperature and reduces the formation of oxides of nitrogen. The water also results in smaller fuel droplets in the combustion chamber to permit far more efficient burning. It overcomes the problem of unburnt fuel which causes smoke and particulates.

'It may revive the market for diesel cars'

Coelho says when the water and diesel fuel emulsion enters the combustion chamber, the water flashes to superheated steam, atomising the fuel into minute droplets which can be totally burnt. "It may all sound very simple but it is a highly complex piece of chemistry. We believe HEM 100 could be either added to diesel fuel at the refinery or even at a filling station."

The cost of a gallon of emulsified fuel should be comparable to ordinary diesel, he says. "If a power unit was designed specifically for the new fuel the advantages would be greater. An added benefit is that the agent could be used for oil-spill dispersal."

## SPECIAL PREVIEW: TWO NEW CARS UNVEILED THIS WEEK



Aircraft styling gives the Saab a tapered nose and a "cockpit" interior while retaining the curved windscreen

**FIRST** photographs of a top-of-the-range saloon, the Saab 9-5 which will be powered by a new generation of ultra-clean and economical turbocharged Ecopower engines, were released by the Swedish company this week, writes Alan Copps.

The front of the four-door 9-5 bears a strong resemblance to current models, keeping the maker's traditional wedge-shaped styling and curved windscreen. The design also features striking rear pillars which are said to give it more space in the back seats. The fascia is inspired by the company's aircraft experience and curves around the driver, giving the feel of a cockpit.

All engines in the range will be turbocharged, offering safe use of power for overtaking and Saab engineers promise it will be their best model yet in terms of roadholding and handling.

The car will be unveiled in Sweden in June and go on show at the Frankfurt motor show in September. Sales in Britain should start the following month and the new car is expected to add to the company's strong performance here.

Unveiling the 9-5, Robert Hendry, Saab's chief executive, confirmed that Britain was the company's outstanding market last year with record sales of 14,900 cars.

**SAAB 9-5**

Body style: four-door saloon.

Engines: choice of turbocharged 2-litre or 2.3-litre four-cylinder, or V6 3-litre featuring a unique asymmetric turbocharger driven by exhaust from one bank of cylinders only.

Interior: will include as standard Saab's innovative head restraints designed to reduce whiplash injuries.

Prices: to be announced.

That means that one in ten executive cars sold here was a Saab. The new car will be a strong competitor for the BMW 5-Series, Audi A-6, Mercedes E-class and Volvo S70. Production of the ageing 9000CD will cease when the new car is introduced but the 9000CS model, renowned for its outstanding safety performance, will continue.

A special fiftieth anniversary model of the 9000CS accounted for a quarter of Saab sales last year.



All-new A6 bears a strong family resemblance to the A4, which has been Audi's standard-bearer over the past year

**AUDI A6**

Body style: four-door saloon.

Engines: four-cylinder, 20-valve, turbocharged 1.8-litre giving 150bhp; six-cylinder 2.8-litre giving 193bhp and 2.4-litre V6 giving 165bhp. 1.9-litre TDI direct injection diesel will be added to range shortly after launch.

Interior: will include electronic climate control and remote central locking as standard.

Price: to be announced.

**ANOTHER BIG** contender in the executive car market was unveiled this week when Audi released the first photographs of its all-new A6. It will go on sale in Britain in May and the company is expecting to sell 4,000 of this model in its first full year, writes Alan Copps.

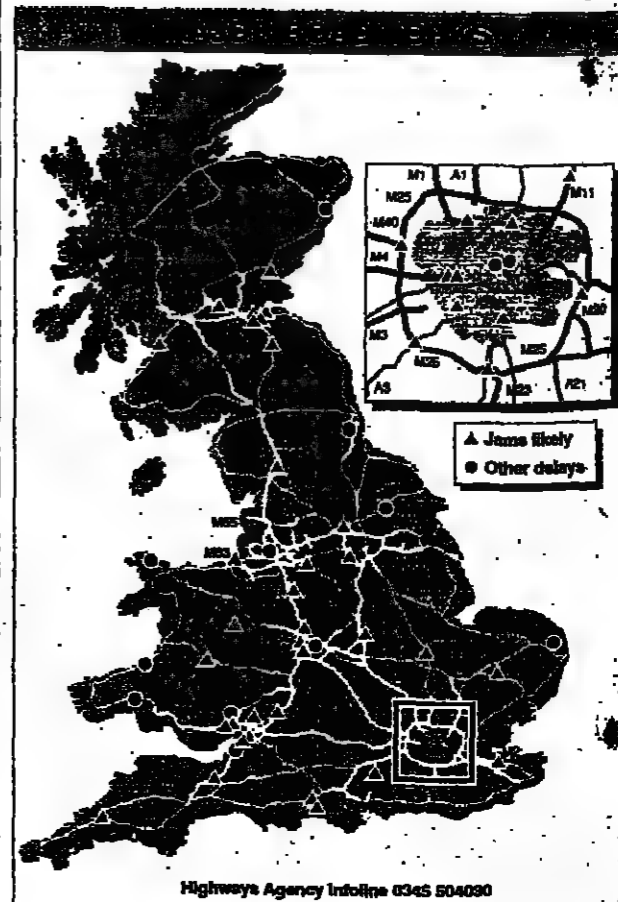
In the first place, the car will offer a choice of four-cylinder, six-cylinder and V6 engines and a direct-injection diesel will be added to the range later. The 2.4-litre V6 is a new design and will deliver 165bhp. Models with the 2.8-litre six-cylinder engine come in both front-wheel drive and the highly rated four-wheel-drive quattro guise.

Styling of the car bears a strong family resemblance to the A4 which has been Audi's major standard-bearer over the past year. The company promises a high specification level with all models featuring lightweight alloy wheels, remote central locking and air-conditioning as standard.

Audi, part of the Volkswagen empire, was another company which met with sales success in Britain last year, with a 19 per cent increase to 30,327 vehicles sold, giving it a 1.5 per cent share of the car market overall. The firm's smaller A3 model is expected to make a bigger impact in the British market this year although at present it is experiencing supply problems.

Audi's reputation was enhanced by victory last year in the fiercely competitive British Touring Car Championship. It won the constructor's trophy and German driver Frank Biela won the championship outright in his A4 quattro, despite the handicap of an increased weight penalty to compensate for the roadholding advantage offered by the four-wheel-drive. Its racing success was repeated worldwide with touring car championships in Germany, South Africa, Italy, Belgium, Spain and Australia being added to that in Britain.

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A3 Kingston: northbound lane closed between Slough Junction and Coombe Lane Junction.  
M1 Junction 2: Hendon; major roadworks with no access to or from A1.  
A405 Upper Edmonton: roadworks over the Lea Valley Viaduct.  
A3212 Westminster Bridge closed overnight and weekends.  
A232 Wallington: roadworks and width restrictions.
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M11 Junctions 8-4: lanes closed.  
A31 Ringwood: roadworks with contraflow.  
A8 Edinburgh: lane closures off-peak.  
A701 Edinburgh: contraflow between Old Burdhouse Road and Jurefield off-peak.  
A52 Tay Road Bridge: maintenance work at the bridge and lane closures Southbound.  
M80 Junction 5: contraflow.  
A170 Strathall Road, Midlothian: contraflow between Captains Road and the A270 City by-pass.  
A7 Harefield Tower Street: maintenance work will cause slight delays.  
A77 Symington: southbound lane closure for roadworks, just north of the Bogend Toll.
- WALES**  
A482 Upper Aberystwyth Bridge on South Road is closed for reconstruction work. Diversions via Panteg Road and the A487, where there are also temporary traffic lights. Expect long rush hour delays.  
A48 Carmarthen: temporary traffic lights and lane restrictions on Pansam roundabout.  
A5025 City Dulas: one-way system over temporary bridge with width and weight limits.  
A48 between Langstone and Penhow: temporary traffic lights.  
A44 between Llangurig and Castell Gurg: temporary lights.  
A488 Pont Sychod, Cymru: temporary traffic lights, also affecting the A485.  
A472 Pontypool: contraflow between Pontymole and the Heron Roundabout.
- NORTH**  
M6 Junctions 37-38: roadworks with a contraflow.



**AUTOFAX** by Les Evans and David Long

**PURVIS DISMISSED HIS SOFT LINES AND SOFT HANDLING, BUT THE JAGUAR XJS IS THE COMPANY'S BEST-SELLING SPORTS CAR...**

**AN ESTIMATED 30% OF NEW CARS IN EUROPE ARE SOLD WITH AIR CONDITIONING**

**THE FIGHTER JET IN THE SAAB TV ADVERTISEMENT USES AN ENGINE MADE BY VOLVO...**

**THE PORSCHE BOATER MUSTERS NEARLY 166bhp PER TON, A CHALLENGER II, TAKE ONLY 20...**





New launch: Kevin Eason on the radical hatchback coupé designed in a flash to outrun the opposition

# Powerful Puma — Ford's 135-day wonder

Ford really has torn up the rule book: out goes bland Euro-styling and in comes yet another radical shape that promises to shake up the competition at the cheapest end of the market.

The company this week unveiled the Puma, a coupé based on the chassis and running gear of a Fiesta. However, the coupé gets a new 1.7-litre Zetec SE power plant with 123 brake horsepower, which means this little hatchback should have enough puff to outrun the competition from Vauxhall and Renault.

What is heartening though is that Ford has not been diverted from its mission to produce some radical new shapes to stick on our high streets. Like the Ka, which the company used to redefine the styling of superminis, the Puma will at least catch the eye from its big bug-eyed headlights right to the swept-up tail.

Vauxhall created the new category of mini-coupé with its Tigra, while Renault muscled into the market with a two-door version of the Megane. Ford has traditionally answered with a derivative Fiesta in XR2 or L4Si form, but now comes a model specifically targeted at buyers who want a sporty two-door without breaking the bank.

Prices will be announced closer to launch later in the year, but should be pitched at around £15,000 to remain within a pound coin's throw of the Tigra and Megane.

For the money, the car will be quite highly specified and feature

## FORD PUMA

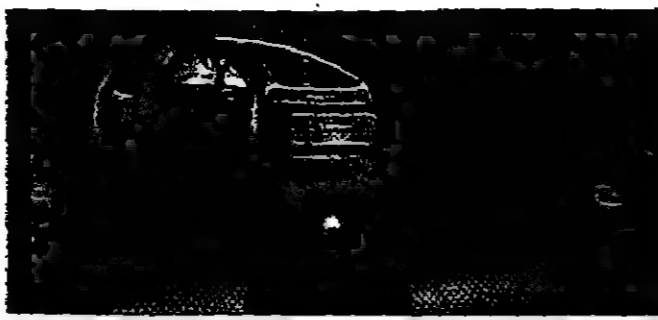
Engine: 1.7-litre, 16-valve Zetec SE, delivering 123bhp at 6,300rpm through five-speed transmission to front wheels.

Performance: 0 to 60mph in 8.8 seconds, top speed 126mph.

Fuel consumption: 38.2mpg on European average cycle.

Equipment: Anti-lock brakes, power steering, four diagonal seat belts, large-control stereo.

Price: around £15,000.



Puma dash is clean with white dials, the stereo easy to use

some of the interior cues learned from the Ka experience, so the dash is clean with white dials, the stereo a simple-to-use big-button format model, the seats equipped and the boot big, though difficult to enter because the lip sits high over the fat rear bumper and is squashed between the three-light rear lamp clusters.

Ford's engineers are said to have worked on the driving experience to make it more pleasurable than the

current line-up, planting big 15-inch wheels onto low-profile tyres at the end of a wider track than the Fiesta, stiffening up the chassis and suspension and making the steering more responsive. Anti-lock brakes are standard.

The 1.7-litre Zetec engine is new to the Puma and will deliver peak torque from as low as 1,500rpm, managed through a close-ratio gearbox — topped off with a nifty aluminium knob — which prom-

ises that the Puma will rev freely and offer a sporty drive.

The bigger engine plus extra body weight means that the Puma is six inches longer and weighs in around 50 kilos heavier than the Fiesta. That should not affect the fuel consumption too drastically though, and Ford forecasts that the Puma will need to drink a gallon of unleaded every 38 miles or so on average.

Not that potential customers for this car will be too concerned about petrol bills, for Ford will be looking for those desirable Dinkies (Double Income No Kids) couples who are now the Holy Grail of the car salesman.

On looks alone, Ford stands a good chance of attracting enough buyers to get rid of the 30,000 to 40,000 it is planning to make at its Fiesta plant at Cologne in Germany, and the Puma gives the company yet another model to add to its ever expanding line-up.

Significantly, Puma is the first Ford designed entirely by computer and in just 135 days, which means the company will be able to develop even more niche models from existing chassis at low cost and remarkably quickly.

Ford's now start with the Ka and go all the way to the big, bulky and American-made Explorer 4x4. With a mini people-mover scheduled for production at Halewood on Merseyside, Ford is clearly aiming to plug every niche gap in the market in its quest for profitability.



Ford based the Puma on Fiesta chassis, but created a novel look for the Zetec-engined coupé

## How Sara's company-car driving skills beat the Road Safety Minister

Alan Copps almost tackles the tricky course at the launch of this year's Times/Lease Plan competition



Sara Copeland, our launch winner, proved the value of her employer's training policy

There could be no better illustration of the virtues of driver training. Sara Copeland is head of human resources for Habitat and, like all other employees the firm provides with a company car, she went on a one-day driving course.

So when we invited her to help launch our annual search for The Times/Lease Plan Company Car Driver of the Year, we were expecting a demonstration of skill and control. Sara provided just that: despite a degree of nervousness at forsaking her usual Audi Coupé for the Nissan Primera S1 which will be used by this year's entrants, she gave a demonstration of smooth, calm driving to beat three men around a course of cones which included two tricky three-point turns and a slalom. The catch? On the Nissan's bonnet was a large plastic saucer with a light-weight ball inside and the trick was to get round the course without spilling the ball.

Sara got round the course without hesitation in just two minutes and four seconds. Now is the chance for you or

your company to match her skill. More and more women are joining the ranks of company car drivers and we hope Sara's example will encourage many of them to take part in this year's competition.

There is a month in which companies great or small can enter for the regional heats by filling in the form below. All you need is three willing drivers, aged over 24 who have a car or use of a car provided as part of their remuneration. Each team entry has to be endorsed by a company director or fleet manager.

The final, at the Silverstone Driving Centre, is a rare chance to experience the excitement of driving under expert supervision at the home of the British Grand Prix. The individual winner will win a trip for two to the Portuguese Grand Prix and the winning team will be offered driver training for 12 employees and the use of a Nissan vehicle for three months.



John Bowis: came third

Our test course at Ham House in Southwest London was designed by Chris Howell, managing director of Drive Tech, one of Britain's leading driver-training companies, which oversees the heats of our competition and

which also trains Habitat's company car drivers.

First to try the course, in appalling weather, was John Bowis, the Minister for Road Safety, who had come to demonstrate the Government's backing for the competition, which is now in its fourth year. The contest aims to heighten awareness of the need for skill and care among those who may cover many tens of thousands of miles during a year's work.

More and more large firms are beginning to invest in training to help ease that reputation for devil-may-care driving which does the company car motorist. Mr Bowis and others concerned with road safety are well aware that even a few hours' instruction in anticipating the hazards of the road can dramatically reduce insurance premiums and the risk of expensive repairs or, worse, injuries and absence from work.

With the disadvantage of

being first — and although he is used to an automatic — Mr Bowis took the Nissan around the course with great skill recording a time of two minutes and ten seconds. Vahid Daei, managing director of Lease Plan, Europe's leading vehicle management company, went round in two minutes 17 seconds and was commended by Chris Howell for his steady style. Then Sara set the pace.

Although Chris was keeping the times close to his chest, your correspondent was impressed by the speed and smoothness of all three, and realised he'd been set a hard task. The car went smoothly, the ball went round and round in the saucer and the last cone of the slalom went flying, incurring a five-second penalty.

I did manage to complete the fastest round, in exactly two minutes, but that penalty was enough to ensure that Sara proved her point.

It's a competition about safety, not speed, but even so seconds count. Fill in the form and give it a try...

## Four-wheel winning driver

THE WINNER of our competition for a drive in a Land Rover at the Midland Auto Trader Four-Wheel-Drive Day on March 1 is Mrs Janet Griffith of Shrewsbury, Shropshire. She correctly answered our question: the first Land Rover was unveiled in 1948.

She wins the use of a Land Rover provided by Marshalls of Peterborough and accommodation for two over the weekend at the Haycock Hotel, Wansford, Peterborough from which the day-long event, one of the best of its kind, starts next Saturday. If you were not lucky enough to win and have access to a suitable four-wheel-drive vehicle there is still time to enter by telephoning Cranium Communications on 01780 766966. Entries close on Tuesday.

## Car cover up

PAY-OUTS ON motor insurance claims last year were higher than expected and could lead to premium rises of between 5 and 10 per cent this year, according to insurers Touchline. In 1995 premiums fell by up to 20 per cent as direct insurers brought fierce competition to the market, but Touchline says they must now go up to meet the increased cost of claims.

## Rather no Moss

STIRLING MOSS has asked us to point out that he will not be taking part in July's race recreation at the historic Rheims circuit in France, as we reported on January 11. However, the organisers are still seeking entries and anyone interested should contact Trisha Pilkington on 01803 722357.

## Fittipaldi festival

EMERSON FITTIPALDI, Brazil's double world champion, is to drive a Penske IndyCar as part of a large American presence at this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed in June. More information: 01243 787766.

THE TIMES  
Lease Plan  
Company  
Car Driver  
1997

## About your company

Name of entrant: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
NB: Entrant should be director/senior manager responsible for the company's car fleet.  
Company name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Post code: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nature of business: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of employees: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of company cars: \_\_\_\_\_

## Nominated drivers

	Surname	Job title	Forename	Age	Points on licence (last 3)
1					
2					
3					
4					

## Competition rules

The closing date for entries is March 28 1997. Drivers must be 24 years of age or over to enter. Only corporate entries will be accepted. Drivers must be nominated by the director or senior manager responsible for the company car fleet. Drivers must be nominated in teams of three. The entrant may also nominate himself/herself as part of the team. Companies can only enter one team. Competitors must drive a company car or vehicle as part of their remuneration package. Qualification for the team/company award will be dependent upon a written test to be completed by the entrant at that team's regional heat. Employees of Lease Plan, DriveTech, Nissan, News International and the Biddle Group are not permitted to enter. In the spirit of the competition, competitors who reached the first in two previous consecutive years, specially organisations such as driver training companies, police, the armed forces and the like are not permitted to enter. A place in the regional heats will be confirmed in writing at least ten days prior to the heat. In the event of a tie, the entrant will be informed in writing prior to the heat. Feedback on each driver's performance will be available after the competition. The reserve driver will be called upon at the regional heat should one of the first three drivers be unable to compete. In the event of a finalist not being able to compete in the final, the next highest scoring driver from the regional heats will be invited to compete in their place. The prize for the winner will be a special trip for two to the Portuguese Grand Prix. The team/company prize will be a driver training programme for 12 employees and the use of a Nissan vehicle for three months. Cash alternatives are not available. The judge's decision is final.

## Which venue?

Please select your 1st and 2nd choice location/date of regional heat (Indicate 1 or 2 in box):

Elstree, Herts	Friday, 25 April	<input type="checkbox"/>
Macclesfield, Cheshire	Friday, 9 May	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bracknell, Berks	Friday, 16 May	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham	Friday, 30 May	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gatwick, Surrey	Friday, 6 June	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coventry	Friday, 13 June	<input type="checkbox"/>

You must ensure that entrant and nominated drivers are able for both first and second choice dates and for the final at Silverstone on Friday, 4 July 1997. Initial qualification may be by telephone questionnaire. Entrants and drivers will be contacted on an individual basis.

Once you have completed this form, fax it back to Lease Plan on 01753 620676

or post to Marketing Dept, Lease Plan, Thames Side, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 1TY. For further information call Lease Plan on 01753 797284

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GENERAL

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## CARMART: YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S NEW, AND WHAT'S USED, ON THE FORECOURTS

## All the power you'll never need

■ TO SPEND more than £4,000 on something you are unlikely ever to know how to use, let alone want to use, is unlikely to endear you to your bank manager, writes Vaughan Freeman.

Yet Nissan quite cheerfully concedes that the vast majority of motorists who will stump up more than £17,000 for their 136mph Primera 2-litre GT, are only ever likely to tap, at most, 75 per cent of their car's handling, driving and high-performance ability. Which means that for most of the time, most Primera GT drivers will be spending their time driving comfortably within three-quarters of the car's capabilities and coming nowhere near the performance limits that earn the car its GT badging and represent about £4,380 worth of elusive excellence.

That might not make financial sense but is probably just as well for everybody else on the road, given that the GT will reach almost twice the maximum UK motorway legal speed and will go from 0-60mph in well under nine seconds. The GT also boasts

## ROAD TEST

extraordinary roadholding, which means that it can go through corners fast, fast, fast, thanks to lateral cornering grip more usually found on the 170mph Skyline GT-R.

Nissan development engineers say that a driver of average ability will be quite safe and comfortable, and have all the excitement likely to be desired in the car, without surging adrenalin, sweaty palms, or representing a worry to other drivers.

This is Nissan's sporting flagship. It goes on sale in May, and the company forecasts it will sell 1,500 of them annually — three times as many as its predecessor. Much of that increased interest will derive from the GT's direct link to the brace of Primers that will participate in this year's British Touring Car Championship, which goes under way next month. Just as the GT's promotion will benefit from Nissan stressing its links to the televised BTCC races, so the GT itself has benefited from a



Primera 2-litre GT: 136mph worth of enhanced handling and performance

development programme that led to the 300bhp BTCC version of the car. Nissan development driver Dirk Schoysman was one of those who spent hours testing and tuning the GT during 4,000 miles and 500 laps of high-speed motoring around the famous Nurburgring racing circuit.

The GT-buyers, says Schoysman, far from spending money on a car they cannot fully use, will own a car that provides huge margins of safety.

This has been done by adapting and refining the

beam rear suspension and multi-link front suspension throughout the Primera range, with slightly wider front and rear tracks and a stiffer body.

Does it work? Certainly, driving the GT on the Enna Pergusa circuit in Sicily, this driver's nerve gave up on fast corners long before the car wanted to. Flat out it was very, very stable, and even in the wet the anti-lock braking system afforded ample stopping power and, as importantly, the ability to brake and steer without the wheels locking.

To see what the car's other

25 per cent was like, Nissan team BTCC driver David Leslie took the wheel, and I took the passenger seat for a few laps. What did he think? Leslie says: "This car now has wishbone suspension on the front, as is the case with Formula One cars. It is nicely balanced so that if you clip the kerbing on the corner, the car settles down again straight away, and it is very forgiving."

In expert hands, the Primera GT is an impressive production car, fast, sure, but at its best in corners. Even at improbable speeds going left or right, the GT holds on long

## PRIMERA GT

Engine: Two-litre, 16-valve, four-cylinder petrol producing 150bhp at 6,100rpm, driving front wheels through five-speed manual gearbox.  
Performance: Top speed 136mph, 0 to 62mph in 8.8 seconds.  
Economy: 25.9mpg in town, 44.1mpg extra urban, 34.0mpg combined fuel cycles.  
Equipment: Air conditioning, anti-lock braking, six-spoke alloy wheels, electrically adjustable and heated mirrors, twin fog-lamps, front power windows, revised seats with leather side-bolsters for lateral support, leather steering wheel.  
Price: £17,500.

## USED CAR BRIEF



**Daihatsu Sportrak.** The Sportrak was launched in 1989 as the fun-loving cousin to Daihatsu's workhorse Fourtrak, and to compete with budget-priced off-roaders from Lada and 'Issara' off-roaders like the Suzuki V-Strom. The 1.6-litre, 100bhp engine got a catalyst a year after launch. A zippy car given its size, with a top speed of around 90mph. Available in two-door and three-door estate, with soft top and removable hard top.

**GOOD NEWS:** The off-road abilities of the Sportrak are recognised, and a catalyst comes as a cheaper than the fancier, bigger, heavier four-wheel-drive cars now on sale. A tough chassis and strong suspension means the Sportrak can take a lot of punishment and should last well. Power steering as standard.

**LOOK FOR:** The range was updated in 1991 with the arrival of the STI soft-top and the two-door estate, the ELI and ELX, which sport owners with electronic windows and sunroof over front seat occupants. Special edition SE and LE come with updated trim. From 1994 the ELI cars have newer suspension and restyled front.

**BAD NEWS:** Off-road capability means that on tarmac the car has a somewhat harsh and jiggly ride which can make long-distance motorway trips hard work. The nature of such cars means that the Sportrak is heavy, and far less nimble than saloon cars, and repairs are more costly.

**AVOID:** Cars that have lived a hard life will have suffered damage underneath. Check steering and suspension that might have been caused by abuse off road, and for scratches to the bodywork. Check low-rider, roller box and that the foldable two-wheel-drive engages smoothly.

**INSURANCE:** Cover from AA Insurance (0800 444777) on a 1993 1.6 Sportrak (ELI) costs a 55-year-old professional, male or female, living in Winchester with full no-claims bonus, £174 a year fully comprehensive. A 22-year-old male with one year no-claims living in south London pays £1,295, and a similar female pays £981.

**REPLACEMENT PARTS:** (prices include VAT) Clutch assembly £185; full exhaust £285; front damper £100; rear damper £70; front brake pads £85; 550 for a 1994-1995 1.6 ELX three-door, and £1,100 for a 1996 1.6 ELX three-door estate.

**OVERALL:** Well built even if it looks like an overblown child's toy, the Sportrak is fun, but its styling is not for the shy and demure. Chutzky is the keyword, a car that comes into its own when the sun is shining.

■ BUILT LIKE a tank, cosy, with a lot of room for people and load, the VW Passat is still unfairly regarded, reports CAP Black Book.

Despite its excellent carrying capacity, its robustness, and the sort of build quality we have come to expect from VW, the Passat (1988 to 1996) nevertheless lacks image, writes Vaughan Freeman.

The estate, thanks to its practicality and carrying ability, is worth more than the saloons, and high-mileage cars are a shrewd buy since the Passat, if looked after, serviced regularly, and supported by a full VW history, barely shrugs as it motors past 150,000 miles.

The GL is most sought after and diesels can also make a good buy, although the 1.9-litre engine is preferred. Best buy is the 1994 M-reg 2-litre GL estate with around 60,000 to 70,000 miles on the odometer, for which you can expect to pay in the region of £8,000.

## FORECOURT

GT 16-valve can be tricky to sell. Over-priced for exhaust smoke, and worn shock absorbers.

■ FIAT'S TIPO (1989-1996) is favoured for its lively engines and a galvanised body which counters suspicions about Italian cars' rustiness. It is roomier than an Escort. The Tipo is also usually quite cheap. Against all of that, the gearchange can be poor, and there is still doubt about the durability of the interior trim.

Even so, Tipos are popular with the made, although colour, mileage and condition can have a dramatic impact on value. Best buy is a 1991 J-reg 1.4 litre S five-door with average miles, for which you can expect to pay £2,500. Avoid GTs that have worked hard and also overpriced diesels.

It is best to avoid the L spec, as this is pretty Spartan in terms of comfort, while the diesel cars are also worth shunning. Watch Black Book.

■ VAUXHALL'S VECTRA will be the first family-sized car on sale in Britain to have side airbags. The company, based at Luton, Bedfordshire, is determined to maintain a lead in the safety stakes over its key rivals and this month makes side airbags the latest "must have" gadget.

The 1.3-litre car is fitted into the side of each front seat and designed to inflate within 15 milliseconds of a collision. Side impacts are among the most dangerous, causing about 30 per cent of all deaths in cars, simply because driver and passenger are most vulnerable to an impact which penetrates the doors. Seatbelts are mainly designed to cope with head-on accidents. However, Vauxhall's

## SPARE PARTS



Vectra: side airbag first

side airbag inflates to cushion the driver or passenger from rebounding into the door or window. The option costs £450, including passenger airbag, or £135 where a passenger bag is fitted.

■ CITROEN HAS increased prices by an average 1.6 per cent but that will include all costs, including tax, number plates and delivery. The French carmaker will give buyers a one-price sticker cost as it builds sales in Britain, last month winning 10 per cent of all sales of superminis with the new Saxo.

■ LAND ROVER is reclaiming its written-off vehicles to cut the market in bodyshells and chassis. The manufacturer is paying up to £2,000 to retrieve written-off Land Rovers to ensure they are not sold to unsuspecting buyers.

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## E280

Sept 94M Auto, silver, navy blue ltr, air con, alarm/immob, H/L, VWS, FSH, 48k, 1 owner, £21,900 ono. 01491 874256.

## 220E

'93-K, Blue/Black met. leather, alloy, FSH, 1 owner, 74k, £14,500. 01628 32395

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Disal estate, Auto, Ang 1994, 49k, FSH, rear facing seats, very good condition. 01725 518464

## C200

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## 220CE

L reg, 32,000 miles, Bonnet, beige cloth, lowered suspension, air, CD, air con, 8 hole alloy, FMBH/SH, alarm, updates, private sale, £22,000. 0171 288 2985 (day) 01494 681023 (even)

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**MARQUE  
OF THE MONTH**



**TOYOTA**

luxurious version of the big four-wheel-drive, which has sold more than three million worldwide since the 1950s; the Camry Sport is aimed at the executive driver who wants a bit of added performance and presence on the road, and the Picnic, which Toyota says is the pioneer of a new class, the "family fun vehicle".

The Amazon comes with full-time four-wheel-drive, a choice of petrol and diesel engines, and the top versions feature a wealth of equipment which would allow up to eight occupants to listen to the CD player while crossing a desert in leather-trimmed, air-conditioned luxury. It will come with a head-up display, with 10 specification Range Rovers and Jeep's Grand Cherokee.

The Picnic is the first vehicle to be launched in competition for Renault's Megane Scenic, the scaled-down MPV voted Europe's Car of the Year in 1996. A number of other carmakers are planning to join the fray. The Camry gives Toyota yet another variation in one of the most hotly contested segments of the company car market.



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# Boring road puts drivers to sleep

By Paul Marston, Transport Correspondent

A STRETCH of dual carriageway suspected of being so boring that it makes drivers fall asleep is to be investigated by the Government's Highways Agency.

The eastbound route of the A180 between the outskirts of Scunthorpe and Grimsby Docks has a sleep-related accident rate two-and-a-half times the national average.

Research carried out by Loughborough University for Humberside police suggested that drivers tended to relax because they were nearing the end of their journey, and then had difficulty in staying awake because the road was so unstimulating.

Prof Jim Horne, head of the university's sleep research team, said that the view along the 20-mile road was exceptionally tedious.

"It's pretty dull and boring, and often not very busy, so drivers don't even have the stimulation of other traffic to keep them going," he said. "It's also very flat, and a lot of

it has embankments running alongside. At night, it's not lit, so you can't see much."

Maybe it's just their cars.

*The Daily Telegraph 11/2/97*

